Coins and Currency Contemplations

A collection of articles from the pages
of the Elgin Coin Club newsletter
2005 - 2010

By James Davis

Introduction

From 2005 to 2017 I served as editor of the Elgin Coin Club Newsletter. One of the monthly features was a coin or currency of the month. After stepping down as editor, I continued contributing monthly articles. Subjects included various U. S. coins and currency, foreign coins and currency, bullion coins, exonumia and other similar topics. Presented here are the articles I wrote. There are some months not represented here. That is from some articles being repeated or articles written by other Elgin Coin Club Members. Lastly all values given were accurate when the article was published.

Special Thanks

I would like to thank the following individuals for their inspiration, encouragement, and support.

Charlene Beal	Q. David Bowers	Don Cerny
Howard Curtis	Donald Dool	Harold Eckhardt
Bob Feiler	John Kent	Robert Leonard
Ray Lockwood	Pete McCoy	Eagle McMahon
Mike Metras	Doug Nelson	Walt Ostromecki
Arthur Schatke	Dave Starling	Gerald Tebben
John Wilson	Nancy Wilson	Carl Wolf

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$4.00 STELLA Patterns

Stella! More than a character in a Tennessee Williams play the stella was a failed gold coin proposed in the late 1870's. According to Breen the denomination was brought about in a failed attempt to reconcile the 'Rivalry' between gold and silver and create a trade coin to be used in Europe to compete with the ducat and similar gold coins. There are two varieties of stellas. The first shows liberty with shoulder length flowing hair as designed by Charles E. Barber. The second one designed by George T. Morgan depicts liberty with coiled hair wrapped on top of her head.

Circling the portrait on both varieties is the metallic composition of the coins in grams. The composition of the coin consists of 6 grams gold, .3 grams silver and .7 grams copper. The reverses of both coins are identical. The center device is a 5-pointed star with the legend one stella and 400 cents. Written around the edge of the coin is united states of America, four dol., e pluribus unum and doe est gloria. This gives the stella the unusual feature of having its denomination written three different ways.

Being technically patterns all stellas are rare. The most common variety is the 1879 flowing hair variety. Various sources list the mintage anywhere from 400 to 600 pieces with 425 being the generally accepted total. The other three varieties are generally believed to have mintages between 10 and 25 pieces. All stellas were struck in proof condition at the Philadelphia mint and most were given to politicians in Washington. When collectors at the time discovered they could not obtain the coins from the mint they soon found out that several dozen specimens were being worn as jewelry by ladies managing brothels in Washington that were frequented by the members of congress who received the coins in the first place. To this day those coins can be identified by the repair marks caused by the removal of loops or other means of mounting.

Coiled Hair Stella

Flowing Hair Stella

2005 Jefferson/ Bison Five cent coin

. On March 1, 2005, the mint released the new Jefferson five cent piece, the third of four in the westward journey series. In a radical move the mint changed both the obverse and the reverse using design concepts both old and new. The new part is the obverse. What first strikes the viewer is the radical change in the portrait of Jefferson. Discarding the Schlag portrait of 1938-2004 the new design is an off-center rendition of Jefferson based on a compilation of the sculpted portrait by Jean-Antione Houdon and paintings by Gilbert Stuart and Rembrandt Peale. This design was created by Maryland artist Joe Fitzgerald. The portrait has Jefferson facing right with the Left edge of the coin just before his ear circling to the top of his forehead. This places his nose directly in the center of the coin. Around the right edge of the coin is the motto in God we trust and the date. Near Jefferson’s chin is the word LIBERTY in calligraphy taken from the declaration of independence. This gives the illusion of Jefferson speaking the word with only the cartoon bubble being missing. Below the word liberty is the mintmark and the designers’ initials appear in the coat collar. The

obverse also has a large open field that can get marked up very easily. This may be a key grading area like the cheek of the Morgan dollar. But with an expected mintage of several hundred million pieces grading this coin may not mean much until you get to ultra-high grades of ms67-68 or 69. As for the old, the reverse marks the return of the bison. This bison is also facing right and appears to be standing on a tree limb. The design of the bison itself is well executed by artist Jamie Franki and is not just a copy of Fraser's bison. Around the edge of the reverse is the legend UNITED STATES OF AMERICA and FIVE CENTS. Above five cents is the motto E PLURIBUS UNUM. As previously mentioned, the high mintage pretty much rules out collecting circulated pieces so we won't be discussing how much of the horn must remain for the coin to grade vf or better. I still cannot completely rule out a 3-legged variety though. Most people I have talked to do not like this new design which puts me in the minority. I feel the Jefferson portrait is a refreshing change of perspective much like the Sacajawea dollar. I am looking forward to the next nickel in 5 or 6months from now.

The 2005 Minnesota Quarter

This month's coin of the month is the Minnesota state quarter. While I find this coin to be extremely attractive, I noticed each design element has been used many times on other state quarters.

This coin features an illustration of the state, this element also appears on the Pennsylvania, Georgia, Massachusetts, South Carolina, New York, Ohio, Louisiana, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Texas quarters. There is a motto or phrase, which appears on every quarter except Maine and Arkansas.

Trees are an element of both this coin and those of Connecticut, South Carolina, Vermont, Maine, Missouri, Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, and California. Water is also shown on the coins of New Jersey, Virginia, Rhode Island, Maine, Missouri, Michigan, and Florida.

Boats and Ships also appear on coins of New Jersey, Virginia, Rhode Island, Maine, Missouri, and Florida.

People are also a key element of the coins of Delaware, New Jersey, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Vermont, Ohio, Illinois, Alabama, Missouri, Iowa, and California.

Finally, birds are also a design feature of South Carolina, Louisiana, Maine, Arkansas, and California.

Coins of many nations

This month's coin of the month is not a single coin but a collection of coins of the world. The goal of this project is to get a single coin from as many nations as possible. This can be an easy project for beginning collectors of a challenging project for more experienced collectors. If you choose to pursue this project, there are a few guidelines to follow. First there are no rules in a collection like this. What one considers to be a complete set may be quite different from another's vision of the same. Even the question on how to organize and display said collection will vary from person to person.

When I began my collection the first thing, I did was purchase the supplies needed to display my collection. Since most coins in the set are going to be very inexpensive, I decided to go the cheap route. First, I purchased a three-ring binder at a garage sale for a dime, then I went to a photo supply store and bought some plastic pages used to display photo slides. I was able to purchase a package of 25 for about $5.00. Finally, I obtained several sizes of 2x2 flips at a

coin show for $3.00 per hundred. My next move was to decide how many coins to include in my set. At my local library I used the Krause catalog and wrote down all the countries I wanted to collect on little slips of paper. To keep things manageable, I limited myself to coins of the 20th. Century. When I was done with that, I took those slips of paper and arranged them alphabetically in the album. With that task finished then I went to the coins I already had and started sorting. My first time through the world coins I had I found I had a little over 100 different. This was a little over a third of the way to my goal of 269 different. Subsequent trips to various coin shows, the most recent the Mid-America coin expo my collection has grown to 220 out of 269. Over the next few months, I look forward to adding to this collection. Embarking on a project like this may not appeal to all collectors but it reminds me why I started collecting in the first place. That is to set a goal, plan your work, complete the plan, and learn something in the process.

Mystery Coins

This month's coins of the month are coins that are rumored to exist, but no one has actually seen, at least not in public.

The first one is the 1964 peace dollar. This coin does have a recorded mintage of about 316,000. It was struck in late 1964 at the request of President Johnson and several western mining interests. Just a few weeks after they were struck the order came to melt them all. Still, this leaves plenty of time for some to mysteriously leave the mint. Yet to this day, none has surfaced. Are the owners

afraid the same fate will befall their coins that befell the 1933 double eagles found in the 1940's and 1950's?

The next is the 1931 Standing Liberty quarter. Noted SLQ expert Jay Cline was offered an example for $15,000 but declined without having seen the coin. The possibility such a coin could exist is possible but not likely. The same goes for the 1964 Franklin Half Dollar. By mid or late November 1963, production could have begun on new dies for the Franklin Half. Moreover, with those dies a mint worker could run off a few pieces on the sly just like in 1913 with the liberty nickel. The late Walter Breen wrote of a dealer who was offered one such coin but declined to purchase until he (Breen) could authenticate it. The coin has since disappeared to parts unknown.

Artist conceptions of the mystery coins

1982 Lincoln cent varieties

This month's coins of the month are the varieties of the Lincoln cent issued in 1982. Spurred on by the rising price of copper the mint changed the composition of the Lincoln cent from a solid copper alloy to a solid zinc planchet plated with copper. This makes the new cents numismatic m&m's. The weight of the cent was also reduced from 3.11 grams to 2.5 grams. Just changing the metal composition would make plenty of varieties but the mint upped the ante by also creating a large and small date variety for most of the possible combinations. In copper the Philly mint issued both large and small date coins while the Denver

mint only issued one variety. In the zinc alloy both the Denver and Philly mints issued large and small date coins.

The best way to tell a copper from a zinc coin is to use a gram scale. Since I do not have the money to spend on a gram scale, I made a device that works just as well. This is also a fun project for yn's to do with proper adult supervision. The device is like a teeter-totter for coins and is easy to make. You need some corrugated cardboard, a drinking straw, a stapler that can open for tacking and some tape. Cut a piece of cardboard 1.5 by 6 inches. Next measure 2 lines one in the middle (3 inches from the end) and the other 2.75 inches from one end. Cut the straw 1.5 inches long and tape it on the line 2.75 inches from the end. Now flip the cardboard over and tack a staple on the short end .25 inch from the end parallel to the short end. On the other end, tack a staple 1 inch from the end parallel to the short end. Pull up each staple slightly to form what looks like a croquet wicket. Place a common cent you know is solid copper (1970's cents work best) on the short end, so it rests in the staple. This will drop down the one side. On the upper end place the coin, you want to test. If the coin is copper the test coin will make the end it sits on go down, if the coin is zinc, the tester will not move. If this doesn't work, you may have to fine-tune the balance by slightly moving the straw either towards the middle or away from the middle.

1913-S type two Buffalo Nickel

This month's coin of the month is the key date in the Indian/Buffalo 5 cent series. The 1913-S type II in low grades (good, very good) is the most valuable coin in the series. This does not count the double dies, over dates and missing leg varieties. I consider those error coins and not necessary for a complete set.

From 1965 to 1995, the coin showed modest gains based on Red Book values. Suddenly between 1995 and 2005, the coin's value increased sharply. In 1965 the values were in good $27.50, in fine $50.00 and in uncirculated was worth $115.00. In 1975, the coin in the same grades was worth $29.00, $46.00, and $120.00. In 1985, the values became $80.00, $125.00, and $550.00 (ms-63). In 1995, the values rose to $75.00, $130.00, and $425.00 (ms-63). Today the values have shot up to $250.00, $350.00, and $1000.00 (ms-63).

While the coin is number one in value in the low grades in higher grades, it is quite another story. In MS-65, there are 17 different dates that are more valuable. Those dates include 1917-S, 1918-S, 1919-S, 1920-S, 1923-S, 1924-D, 1924-S, 1925-S, 1926-S and 1927-S.

For the bargain hunters out there one way of obtaining a 1913-S type II is by buying an acid date coin. For decades, people have tried to restore the date of a buffalo nickel by using an acid solution. The results of this process vary greatly. Sometimes you can see the date clearly and sometimes you need a magnifying glass to see the results. For many years, most collectors shunned these coins considering them alterations and defects. Recently that thinking is starting to change and these coins are starting to gain acceptance in the collecting community. On eBay, the prices for this coin with a restored date range from $40.00 to $100.00 depending on the quality of the restoration. As for myself, I'm still somewhat a purist but for budget's sake may breakdown and buy a restored date coin.

The coins of Edward VIII

During the brief reign of EdwardVIII no coins bearing his likeness were issued in England. There were a few patterns struck with the majority of those melted. The few that survive are extreme rarities selling for tens of thousands apiece. If Edward had remained King, he would have broken a centuries long tradition of alternating profiles on British coinage. The patterns show the left profile of Edward, the same as his predecessor, George V. After Edward stepped down his successor, George VI resumed the tradition of alternating profiles. George VI based his portrait as if Edward had kept the tradition and had his left portrait on his coins.

This being said there are coins of Edward VIII available to even the most modest collector’s budget. Four of England's colonies and possessions issued coins with Edwards’s name but not his image.

Fiji also issued a penny in 1936. This coin is designated KM6 and has a mintage of 120,000.

British East Africa issued a penny dated 1936 with both an h and k mintmark. The coin is designated by the Krause catalog as KM23. Other coins issued by this territory are a ten-cent coin, 1936, 1936h and1936n. The ten-cent coins are in the Krause catalog as KM24.

British West Africa issued three denominations, a 1/10 penny, a 1/2-penny and a penny all dated 1936.Some of the coins have the H or KN mintmark and some have no mint mark. The Krause catalog numbers for these coins are 1/10 penny KM14, 1/2 penny KM18 and 1-penny KM16.

Finally, New Guinea also issued a coin of Edward VIII. This is a one-penny coin and only shows Edwards initials. This coin is listed under KM 6 and has a mintage of 360,000.

British West Africa

New Guinea

Fiji

1927-D Double Eagle

When you think of the great rarities of US coinage the coins that come to mind most often are the 1913 liberty 5c, the 1804 dollar, the 1933 double eagle and the 1885 trade dollar amongst others. One of the most overlooked rarities is the 1927-D double eagle. With a mintage of 180,000, this issue is far from the lowest in the series, but with almost all melted at the mint it is indeed an exceedingly rare coin. Walter Breen and other noted numismatic authors estimate there are about 12-14 pieces extant. Until recently, it was a major event when one appeared in an auction. Sometimes many years pass between offerings. Within the last six months, two have appeared in auctions. One sold recently for 1.8 million dollars. The other will be sold the first week of January at the Florida United Numismatists convention. The coin that sold for 1.8 million was graded MS 67 and the one at the FUN show is graded MS 65. It would be interesting to see what price difference there is in the prices realized.

The Bi-Centennial quarter

The Bi-centennial quarter not only is it the most attractive of the Bi-centennial coins, it is also the forerunner of the current state quarter series. Legislation for this coin began as early as 1966 and by the early 1970's all the deals were struck, and laws enacted to make this program come to life. In 1973, an open competition for designs was announced and out of over 100 submissions, 12 were selected as finalists. Out of that 12 the design by Jack Ahr was selected for use on the quarter. For his design, Mr. Ahr was awarded a sum of $5,000. There was some controversy about his design. Some felt he copied the design from a

current postage stamp, but it was pointed out the stamp also took its design from a painting "the spirit of "76". In April 1974, some trial strikes were made in proof and given to President Ford and several others. These coins identified by their lack of a mintmark were soon recalled and replaced by the mint. It is not known if all were returned and that some might exist somewhere.

This coin was offered to the public in several versions. The first is the regular circulation strike. Over the two years of production, about 1.67 billion were struck at both Philadelphia, Denver, and most likely West Point. This makes this quarter the most common commemorative ever issued by the US mint. The quarters were also included in the mint sets of 1975 and 1976. The only way to know if a quarter was struck in 1975 is if it is in a sealed 1975 mint set. Other varieties offered to collectors are a clad proof included in the regular proof sets of 1975 and 1976 and two types of 40% silver coins issued in three-coin sets. The sets consisting of a quarter, half and dollar were issued in both proof and mint state finishes. The issue prices for the collector sets were $6.00 for the mint set, $7.00 for the clad proof set, $9.00 for the mint state silver set and $15.00 for the proof silver set. Between 1975 and 1980, the prices for the silver sets varied with the price of silver.

The clad bi-centennial quarters have the same specifications as the previous clad quarters. The 40% silver quarters consist of outer layers of .800 silver and .200 copper and a core of .209 silver and .791 copper. The net silver weight is .0739 ounce per coin or just a tiny bit more than a 90% silver dime. Putting together a set of bi-centennial quarters is an easy task. Nice uncirculated business strikes can be found for a couple of dollars each. Clad proof, silver proof and silver mint state coins can also be found between $1 and $5.

1900 Lafayette Dollar

This month's coin of the month is the 1900 Lafayette dollar. This coin the nation's first commemorative dollar was struck to raise funds to erect a statue of General Lafayette at the Paris exposition of 1900. Charles Barber designed the coin that features on the obverse the images of General Washington in the foreground and General Lafayette behind. Circling the portraits are the words United States of America and Lafayette dollar. Although the coin says dollar it is assumed to be one dollar. This is reinforced by the fact the coin is struck to the same specifications as the Morgan dollar. The reverse features an artist depiction of the statue and the inscription "erected by the youth of the United States in honor of general Lafayette" and "Paris 1900". The two mottos missing on this coin that appear on almost all other US coins are liberty and in God we trust.

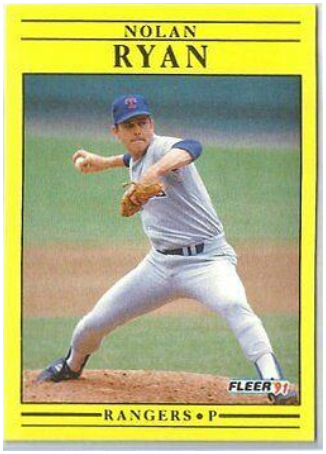
The law authorizing this coin was signed on March 3, 1899, and the coins were struck on Dec 14, 1899. From an original mintage of 50,000 only about 36,000 were sold with the remaining coin melted later. There is a single proof known to exist at this time. The image of Washington is the first time a president has appeared on a legal tender US coin. Three years later President Jefferson will be featured on a US coin honoring the Louisiana Purchase. The current values of the Lafayette dollar are AU $650., MS60 $925., MS 63 $2,100. and MS65 $10,500.

1992 Olympic Silver Dollar

This month's coin of the month is the 1992 Olympic silver dollar commemorative. This coin was one of three commemoratives issued by the mint to raise funds for the US Olympic committee.

The obverse depicts a baseball pitcher about to deliver a pitch to the plate. Many people have said the pose was taken from a Nolan Ryan baseball card issued the year previous (fleer #302). The image on the coin is remarkably like the card right down to the folds in the uniform. There is only a minute difference in the position of the arms that keeps them from being an exact match. Circling above the pitcher is the word Liberty. In the field to the right of the pitcher is in God we trust. In the field to the left of the pitcher are the Olympic rings with USA above. Below the pitcher's mound are the designers' initials JRD-CYM for John R. Deecker and Chester Y. Martin. Also below the mound is the date, 1992.

The reverse of the coin features a heraldic shield flanked by two laurel branches. Above the shield are the Olympic rings with USA inside the top three rings. Below the shield is a ribbon with e pluribus unum incuse. Around the upper edge is United States of America and the mintmark appears to the right of the shield. The edge is reeded with the letters XXV OLYMPIAD appearing four times oriented twice to the obverse and reverse. The coin weighs 26.73 grams and consists of .900 silver and .100 copper. The actual silver weight is .77 ounce. Mintage figures are as follows, for the uncirculated version struck at Denver 187,562 and the proof struck at San Francisco 504,544. The coin was issued in various packages with the Olympic half dollar and half eagle. Current values in ms65 grade are $24.00 for the uncirculated and $29.00 for the proof.



1991 Fleer Nolan Ryan #302

The 1793 chain cent

This month's coin of the month is the 1793 Chain cent. This is the first coin officially struck by the U.S. Mint for circulation. According to Walter Breen, the mint struck 36,103 pieces from March 1-12, 1793. Shortly after their release the coins design came under much criticism. The obverse was said to resemble either a mad woman or an Indian squaw. The reverse was decried for implying a link between liberty and slavery. By June of 1793, the mint had discontinued the chain design and began striking the new wreath reverse cents. The new design featured an improved obverse portrait (but not by much), and a more artistic and less controversial reverse.

The chain cent measures about 27 mm in diameter and weighs about 208 grains of pure copper. Most specimens extant are well worn with very few mint state specimens known. The two most common types are the AMERI. Reverse and the AMERICA reverse. Values for this coin are as follows, in ag-3 4,000 to 5,000, in fine-12 20,000 to 30,000 and in au-50 75,000 to 90,000.

Notes with consecutive identical numbers

This month's column deals with paper money, specifically notes with strings of numbers five or more in a row the same. Like an odometer on a car that tracks the miles traveled, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing uses serial numbers to keep track of money issued. Many collectors collect bills with fancy serial

numbers such as radar, repeater, stepladder, and swims. I have made a chart showing the relative scarcity of solid number sequences of five or more. In this exercise, I am assuming no note numbered 00000000 and all notes come from the same reserve bank with no star notes.

Solid eight number notes.

11111111 thru 99999999. There are nine possible or one every 11,111,111 notes.

Seven in a row, these can be the first seven or the last seven.

0000000X thru 9999999X

X0000000 thru X9999999

In this case, the X is a variable of nine numbers. The only number it cannot be is the number it is next to. For example, X1111111, the X cannot be 1 because that would change the block of seven in a row to eight in a row. In every 99,999,999 notes there are 180 possible notes with seven consecutive numbers or one out of every 555,555 notes. The number 180 is derived by multiplying the variable X (9) times the 10 seven in a row possibility (0-9) for each of the first and second seven in a row possibility. (9 x 10) + (9 x 10) = 180.

Six in a row is a little trickier. The block can be the first, middle or last six in a row.

000000XY thru 999999XY

X000000X thru X999999X

YX000000 thru YX999999

The new variable Y can be any number 0-9 because it is separated from the main block by a non-matching number X. Doing the math we find there are 2,610 possible six in a row notes or one every 38,314 notes. (9 x 10 x 10) + (9 x 9 x 10) + (10 x 9 x 10) = 2610.

Finally five in a row is calculated in a similar fashion as six in a row.

00000XYY thru 99999XYY X00000XY thru X99999XY

YX00000X thru YX99999X

YYX00000 thru YYX99999

Doing the math, we find there are 34,200 possible five in a row notes or one every 2,923 notes. (9 x 10 x 10 x 10) + (9 x 9 x 10 x 10) + (10 x 9 x 9 x 10) + (10 x 10 x 9 x 10) = 34,200.

Prices for such notes increase with the number of consecutive numbers. For a dollar bill in crisp new condition a five in a row note is worth about $10.00, six in a row is worth about $15.00, seven in a row is worth about $ 25.00 and a solid eight is worth $1,200.00.

1994 Women in military silver dollar

This month's coin of the month is the 1994 Women in military service memorial dollar. This coin was issued to help defray the costs of building the Women in military memorial in Arlington National Cemetery. The bill for the memorial was signed in 1986 and the building was opened on October 18, 1997. The memorial sits on 4.2 acres and features displays, educational forums, a small library and computer access to the records and memorials of registered women veterans. There is also a small gift shop selling items related to the memorial.

The coin is one of three issued that year dealing with veterans. The other two are the Prisoner of War silver dollar and the Vietnam Veterans silver dollar. The obverse of the coin features busts of five women each representing a branch of

the military. The branches are the Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard. T. James Farrell designed the obverse.

The reverse designed by Thomas D. Rogers Sr. shows the entrance of the memorial. The coin is the standard size and weight of a silver dollar and is composed of 90% silver and 10% copper. The coin was struck in both uncirculated and Proof versions. The uncirculated version struck at West Point has a mintage of 53,054 and the Proof struck at Philadelphia has a mintage of 213,201.

When the mint offered the coins there were two prices for each coin. The pre-sale price for the unc. Coin was $27.00 with a regular price of $32.00. The prices for the proofs were $31.00 pre-sale and $35.00 regular. Despite the low mintages, especially the unc's the coin is easy to find. Values for the unc's are $55.00 in ms65 and $65.00 in ms69 and the proofs are $48.00 in proof65 and $60.00 in proof 69 deep cameo. With a little shopping, you can find the coins for $15.00 to $20.00 below these prices. The only collectable variety I have found so far is a special edition by PCGS that have the inserts signed by Jessica Lynch. These coins sell for prices comparable to any other Women in military coin.

Hey there Georgie boy

This month's currency of the month is not an actual piece of currency but a web site. Hank Eskin started wheresGeorge.com on December 23, 1998, with the intention of tracking the circulation patterns of U. S. currency. Although the site is free to join the moderators try to raise funds to run the operation by selling souvenirs and collectables related to the site. One of the items it no longer sells are rubber stamps used by members to label the bills entered in the sites

database. The federal government contended the sale of these stamps violated the U. S. code stopped the sales declaring the stamping of the bills is constituted advertising for the web site. This has not deterred the sites members who call themselves "georgers" from obtaining their own stamps or simply handwriting the website on dollar bills. As of 10-18-2006 there are well over 93 million bills registered on this site with a face value of over 516 million dollars.

Anyone with a valid email address can register and setting up an account only takes a few minutes. Once registered you can start entering bills by series and serial number. If the bill you enter has already been entered, you will see a listing of when and where each georger has spent that bill. This site can only track bills of series 1963 0r later and can track both regular notes and star notes. Most bills entered receive only two or three hits and some once entered are never heard from again. The record for most hits is 15. Even though the site is called where's George, dollar bills are not the only denominations registered. All denominations up to $100 can be found in the sites database. To this day, I have never seen a where's George $100. Currently I have four bills I am tracking, most have not ventured very far from here, but one has made the trip from Rockford, IL to Cedar Rapids, Ia. back to the Chicago area.

In Canada there is a similar site called "Where’s Willy." This site opened on Feb. 20, 2001 and is named after Wilfrid Laurier who was Prime minister of Canada from 1896 to 1911. His portrait appears on the Canadian $5 bill.

Collecting Jefferson nickels from circulation

For the last few years, I have been going through my change drawer at work looking for interesting coins in circulation. Aside from the occasional silver coin I have also been keeping Jefferson nickels dated 1954 and earlier. I chose 1954 as my cutoff date because that was the last year of S mintmark coins until 1968.

Over the course of those few years, I found and saved about 4 or 5 rolls worth of nickels all at face value. Last December I received a set of Jefferson nickel folders by the Harris Company dated 1938-1961, 1962-1995 and 1996-date. Each folder has room for 65 coins and a space to show the coins common reverse. Not counting any varieties there are 156 coins in a circulation set of Jefferson nickels from 1938-2006. So, with my previously saved nickels and folders in hand I set out to fill as many holes as possible. It wasn't long before I had book 1 mostly full. My next step was to fill as much of the other two books as possible. The first thing I did was make a list of the dates I needed and start checking my change again. It was easy to find decent circulated examples of all dated from 1960 on. I also went to banks and currency exchanger and obtained rolls of nickels to search through. After a few months I had narrowed my search to 8 coins, all obtained for face value. During the summer, while at a coin show I purchased a 1939-S and a 1942-D for a total of $2.70. This brings my total cost for 150 coins to $10.10; the folders cost about $9.75 for a grand total expense so far of $19.85. I estimate the remaining six coins, 1938-S, 1939-D, 1943-D, 1948-S, 1950-D and 1951-S will cost me about $25.00. While looking through rolls of nickels I have come up with a relative rarity scale.

- Coins that today will take a miracle to find: 1939-D, 1950-D
- Very difficult to find: 1938-D & S, 1939-S, 1943-D, 1950-P, 1951-S, 1955-P
- Hard to find: All other war nickels, S mint coins before 1954
- Slightly rarer than common: D mint coins before 1954, 1958-P, 1959-P
- Common: All others

Sure, you may be able to go on eBay and find similar sets for about the same price, but what is the fun in that. So, unleash the hidden collector inside you, you may have a good time putting together your own set.

Twenty-cent pieces

In the 1870's the U.S. Mint conducted a failed experiment by issuing a twenty-cent coin. President Grant signed the bill authorizing the coin on March 31, 1874. The main reason for issuing the coin was to provide an equivalent coin to the French and Swiss Franc and Spanish Peseta. Another reason was to use some of the abundant silver from the Comstock Lode and provide minor coinage to the western states. The obverse of the coin shows the same seated liberty design as featured on the half-dime, dime, quarter, half dollar, and dollar. The reverse has an eagle in the same style as the trade dollar. After the coin was released, the public soon complained the coin was too close in size to the quarter, making this the 19th century equivalent of the Susan Anthony dollar. The concept of issuing a 20-cent coin is not new; in fact, many countries today issue that denomination. Some of those countries are all Euro issuing countries, England, Australia, New Zealand, Jamaica, and Hong Kong.

The coin is 20 mm in diameter and weighs 5 grams of 90% silver and 10% copper.

Assembling a complete set of these coins is a task for collectors with very deep pockets. The complete set consists of 10 coins, 5 mint state and 5 Proof. The business strikes start at about $100 in good and rise to about $5,000 to $6,000 in MS-65. Proof coins will bring from $8,000 to $20,000 in Prf-65. Included in this set are two major rarities, first is the 1875-S Proof of which there are 6-12 known and the 1876-CC of which 18-25 is known. Both these coins easily bring $100,000 to $200,000 when they appear at an auction, which is very seldom.

The 1947 red book reprint.

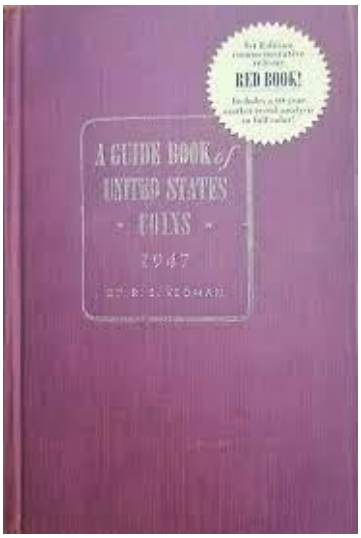
For the last decade or so, I have searched bookstores, book sales and eBay for older numismatic literature. In my quest I have found volumes dating back to 1909 showing how much the hobby has changed in the last hundred years. With that in mind, I was eager to read the reprint of the 1947 red book. This book is an interesting snapshot of numismatics at the end of WW II. At that time, there were very few publications available to coin collectors. There were B. Max Mehl's books, The Numismatist published by the A.N.A. and Numismatic Scrapbook magazine, none of which went into the detail the red book provided.

Looking through this book, I see how many things have changed. The first thing I noticed was the overall appearance of the book. In the first edition, the illustrations are generally well done although some look a little blurry. This was probably due to the lack of sophistication of the printing process at the time. Another thing I noticed was how some coin series names have changed. For example, the Barber dimes, quarters, and halves are listed as "Barber, liberty or "Morgan" type." It seems most silver coins at the turn of the 20th century were referred to as Morgan coinage even though Charles Barber designed them.

Another series that underwent a name change was the Waking Liberty Half, in the 1947 red book it is referred to as the Liberty Standing Half. Coin mintages are another area that has seen changes. While most figures remain as they were, an example of change is the 1913 Liberty 5c. In the 1947 red book, the mintage is listed at 6 pieces. The ownership of all coins was attributed to Col. Green who eventually broke up the set.

Today it is believed the sixth coin was a pattern for the 1913 buffalo 5c. All 5 known 1913 liberty 5c are well documented. While the prices listed in this book seem extremely cheap, they were close to the actual selling price at the time. Still a good shopper could get some quality coins for a bit less.

Some prices from this book are, 1918 Lincoln-Illinois Half $3.00, 1936 Elgin Half $2.50, 1909-S V.D.B. 1c $15.00, 1916-D 10c. $65.00, 1893-S Morgan Dollar $100.00 and a 1927-D $20 gold $550.00. This book would make a nice addition to anyone's numismatic library.



Elgin Coin Club on the internet

These days you can find just about anything on the internet, both good and bad. I decided to try to find out what information about the Elgin Coin Club is out there.

For this experiment I chose two search engines to look through, Google and Yahoo! Search. Both sites yielded about the same number of "hits", about 350. In internet terms, this is a tiny number as some searchers can yield 20 to 30 million "hits" or more.

The first responses direct the searcher to the club’s web page either through Mike M's Worksandwords.com or the club’s old website address on Prairienet.com. The next level of search listed many sites that as part of their site have links to the internet. One of the types of links is organizations, particularly collectors' organizations of which the Elgin Coin Club is one of many. The types of sites featuring clubs are other coin club sites, major numismatic organizations, local and state governments, and numismatic businesses.

Some of the other ways the club can be found on the internet is information site, some of which use quotes from this newsletter. There is one site featuring a doctoral dissertation by Richard A. Bassett of Pace University. In his dissertation, he examines the possibility of using computer programs to assist in grading coins.

Both search engines have a section for photos with the yahoo site containing over 100 photos relating to the club. Most of the photos, taken from this

newsletter illustrate coin and collectables although there are several photos of club members.

Finally, as I was searching, at the halfway point the listings stopped. The search engine stated all other responses are more of the same ones listed earlier. I had the option to check them out but decided against it. So, if you want to find out for yourself what the world thinks of the Elgin Coin Club go to your browser and type in "Elgin Coin Club" and let your mouse do the walking.

1970-S Small date Lincoln Cent

This Month's coin of the month is the 1970-S small date variety Lincoln cent. Not counting the double die varieties this is the key of the Memorial cent series. According to Breen, the term small date is a misnomer as the main difference in the two varieties is the positioning of the numerals. Since I have trouble telling whether the "7" is high or low I have come up with alternate ways of telling the varieties apart. The first way is to look inside the loop of the "9" in the date. On the small date version, the inner loop is tapered and pointed, on the large date it is square and blunt. Another way to tell is the word liberty. On the small date variety, the word is weak and a bit blurry, on the large date the word is strong and crisp. The mintage figures for both varieties is a bit over 490 million how many of each exist is anybody's guess. Current selling prices for the small date ranges from $25 in MS60 to $60 in MS65.

Some small date cents have been found in mint sets providing a cherry picking opportunity for collectors.

Proof cents struck that year were also made in large and small date varieties. Of the two, the large date is by far more common. Current selling prices for the 1970-S proof cents in Proof-65 are $1.00 for the large date and $60 for the small date.

LARGE DATE SMALL DATE

The 10 worst U.S. coins of the last 50 years

Over the last 50 years, the mint has produced many beautiful and artistic coins. The mint has also produced many coins that are not as artistic or interesting. The following list in order of release is in my opinion the bottom ten U. S. coins of the last 50 years.

1. Lincoln memorial cent. For the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's, birth the mint felt obligated to change the cent. The resulting reverse is a bland depiction of the Lincoln memorial that some have compared to a trolley car.
2. JFK Half dollar. In a rush to issue a tribute to the slain president, the mint cut corners on creativity. The mint could have explored more artistic designs rather than plain presidential seal that was used.
3. SBA Dollar. The standard by which all bad U.S. coins are judged. Instead of using Gasparro's fine Liberty design, the mint (on congress' urging) chose an unflattering portrait of Susan Anthony and recycled the reverse of the IKE dollar.
4. Maryland State quarter. If you did not know that was Maryland's state capitol dome it could be from almost any domed building of that period.
5. New Hampshire State Quarter. This coin is a numismatic Rorschach test. Can you see a man on this coin?
6. Louisiana State quarter. This coin shows Louisiana as part of the Louisiana Purchase but teaches little about the state itself. A coin focusing on the states cultural influence would have been better.
7. Missouri State quarter. Rub a dub-dub three men in a tub. Floating down a river lined with something that almost looks like trees. No wonder the coin's designer was upset at the mint for ruining his design.
8. Michigan State quarter. This quarter shows the great lakes with Michigan highlighted as an afterthought. Like Maryland and Louisiana tells nothing about the state itself.
9. Ocean in view five cent. When I saw the drawing of this coin, I liked the design. When I saw the actual coin, I was extremely disappointed. What you see in the drawing does not translate well to an actual coin. The words ocean in view o' the joy is almost unreadable even on uncirculated coins. After the coins circulate for a while, the lettering will turn into a smudge.

10. Presidential dollar series. In previous issues, I have expressed my dislike for this coin. The design is plain, and the edge lettering is an interesting concept that does not work. The Edsel of American coins.

The Brasher Doubloon

In 1787, New York goldsmith Ephraim Brasher produced some trial gold pieces on the request of his friend George Washington. The coins are about the same size and weight as a Spanish Doubloon and were worth fifteen dollars. The main design element on the obverse is an eagle with a shield over its breast holding arrows in one claw and an olive branch in the other. The design and pose of the eagle is very similar to the reverse of the Kennedy half dollar. Around the rim is the inscription "E PLURIBUS UNUM" and the date 1787. The reverse shows a sunrise over a mountain by a shore. Circling around the rim are the words "NOVE EBORACA COLUMBIA EXCELSIOR." This phrase roughly translates to New York land of Columbus ever higher or upward. Also, on the reverse Brasher placed his name between the word excelsior and the central design element to let people know that he made the coin. Brasher also punched his initials on the obverse of the coin. Of the seven known examples six have the punch on the wing and one has the punch on the shield. Brasher also applied his punch to some foreign coins he had assayed to let merchants know they were good to accept. You could call these EB marked coins American chop marks. Recent auction prices for the Brasher doubloon is 1.1 million for the punch on the wing and 1.5 million for the punch on the shield.

As a side note, in 1947 John Braham directed a movie titled "The Brasher Doubloon." The Movie based on the novel "The High Window" by Raymond Chandler starred George Montgomery as Phillip Marlowe. The film is a classic example of film noir with the coin as the central element in a plot of deceit, murder, and blackmail. The film also stars Nancy Guild, Conrad Janis, and Florence Bates.

Acid date Buffalo nickels

Despite being one of the most popular American coins the Buffalo nickel suffered from a major design flaw. The date on the obverse was placed in a position where it would quickly wear off in the normal course of circulation. The same problem also existed on the reverse with the words five cents, but that problem was corrected during the first year creating two distinct varieties. Why the date was not protected in a similar way is still unknown. As the years passed, collectors found a way to bring back an otherwise lost date by using a solution of ferric chloride. This product was later marketed under the trade name nic-a-date. Using this product is still the subject of much controversy in the collecting community. Some purists believe these coins are junk and have no place in their collections. Others believe they are good for fillers, and some believe they deserve the same respect as a very low-grade coin.

Using nic-a-date on a coin is the numismatic equivalent of playing the lottery. You place a drop of solution on the date area and hope for the best. Sometimes no date appears even after several tries, other times the date appears but is awfully hard to read. There are times the date will appear clearly, but the date shown is a common year and hardly worth the effort. Rarely will a collector uncover one of the better dates that can be clearly seen. The best dates one hopes to find are 1913-D t.2., 1913-S t.2., 1914/3-P, 1914-D, 1915-S, 1916-S, 1918/7-D, and 1921-S. Using nic-a-date on a type 1 nickel is not necessary as the date can only be 1913.

One thing to consider about restoring the date on Buffalo nickels is most major third-party grading services will not certify these coins. The few that do certify these coins clearly mark on their holders the coin is acid treated. I saw a couple of certified acid treated nickels on eBay. They were both 1918/7-D and one was offered for $800 and the other $385. Most listings however are of raw coins ranging in price from a few dollars to $60 for a 1921-S to $124 for a 1913-S t. 2.

I believe acid date coins are ok as fillers and only for the rarest dates. The problem with acid date coins when you go to sell them you may take a loss unless you purchased them super cheap. I recently purchased a partial set of Buffalo nickels including an acid date 1913-S t. 2. for about $47. At an average cost of 85 cents this coin is worth it. I plan to keep the two best coins in the set, the 1913-S type 1 and 2. The type 1 has no date but is easily identifiable as a

type 1 with a clear mintmark. I plan to sell the remaining coins, even those with acid dates for enough profit to make this deal worthwhile. Whether or not you choose to include acid date coins in your collection is your choice, but the option is always there.

Sing a song of sixpence.

Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue and a lucky sixpence in her shoe. This rhyme well known to brides is believed to bring good luck to their upcoming marriage. While the last part is well known to English brides, most American brides know little about the sixpence. First struck in 1551 during the reign of James I, the sixpence was an important part of British coinage for over 400 years. Under the old system of British money, the sixpence was a logical denomination at half a shilling. In the US until the mid-1800's when foreign coins were still legal tender the sixpence was worth about 12 ½ cents or one Spanish bit. When England switched to the decimal system in the early 1970's some old timers still used the sixpence at the new rate of 2 ½ new pence. By the early 1980's the British government demonetized all pre decimal coinage. One interesting story about the sixpence is that guitarist Brian May of the rock group Queen used a sixpence as a guitar pick. He also had an agreement with a guitar manufacturer to include a sixpence with all guitars bearing his name. Sixpences were struck in sterling (.925) silver until 1920 when the silver content was reduced to .500. Silver was completely removed in 1947 in favor of a copper-nickel alloy. The last sixpences were struck for circulation in 1967 and for proof sets in 1970. Collecting sixpences can be an expensive and time-consuming endeavor. Early coins (before 1700) are very scarce and even low-grade specimens can run several hundred dollars. After

Victoria, the coins start becoming more common and the coins issued during the reigns of George VI and Elizabeth II are quite common. You can buy a nice copper nickel sixpence for a bride in your family for less than fifty cents.

Elgin Coin Club 50th anniversary

Founded in 1957 the Elgin Coin Club has served the numismatic community in northeast Illinois for fifty years. But what makes this club special? How has it kept vital while so many other clubs in the area have disbanded? The biggest reason is the club's membership. Our club may not have the largest membership or the deepest pockets, what we do have are members who care deeply about the club. Another reason is the interesting programs and activities the club provides. Each month our members bring in a variety if interesting items for our show and tells. Several times each year a member will present a lecture on a favorite topic and sometimes we will show slides or videos from the ANA. Before each meeting, members can buy, sell, or trade whatever coins they bring with them. At the end of each meeting is a raffle with some valuable prizes and a drawing for a member's only prize. Four times a year the club holds an auction. Two of the auctions are by the members selling extra inventory. The sellers receive all proceeds of the sale, as there are no buyers or sellers' fees. The other two auctions are "White Elephant" auctions. In these auctions, all lots are donated to the club and the club keeps all proceeds. Over the last 8-10 years one item that keeps showing up in the white elephant auction is a bottle of shredded money. Whomever wins this item signs the label and re-donates the item to the next auction. The two biggest days of the year in the club are our annual coin show and holiday dinner. Since 1962, the annual show has been the primary source of funds for the club. At the show, there are over 30 dealers, an appraisal table run by a club member, a raffle featuring valuable gold and silver coins, a young numismatist auction and door prizes. Our December meeting has the largest

attendance of the year due to the nice dinner the club provides. The main purpose of the holiday dinner is to encourage fellowship among the club members. It is this fellowship that keeps the club vital and alive and perhaps the club will still be around to celebrate its centennial in 2057.

Clad Washington Quarters 1965-1974, 1977- 1998

This month's coins of the month are the Clad Washington quarters issued from 1965 to 1998 not counting the bicentennial quarters of 1975- 1976. In the early 1960's two main factors lead to the removal of silver from the quarter. The first was the rising price of silver. In the past the price of silver rose above face value of the coins. This caused temporary shortages that relaxed as the price of silver eventually fell back. The other reason was the governments' belief the coin collector was hoarding the coins when in fact it was the vending machine industry and phone companies not recycling coinage that caused the shortage. After some experimentation, the mint settled on an alloy of two layers of 75% copper and 25% nickel bonded to a core of solid copper. The quarter's diameter remained the same at 24.25 mm and the weight reduced to 5.67 grams. During the first three years, the government did not issue either mint sets or proof sets with the new quarters. They did however issue a hybrid special mint set consisting of better struck uncirculated coins. Also, during this period, no coins were struck with a mint mark. In 1968, things returned to normal with the resumption of mint marks, mint sets and proof sets. Things proceeded smoothly until 1974 when the eagle reverse was suspended so the mint could produce the now familiar bicentennial quarter. The eagle returned in 1977 and continued until the end of this series in 1998 to make room for the upcoming state quarter program. It still is not decided if the eagle will return in 2009 or if the territories will be featured on future quarters.

Collecting clad quarters is an easy goal anyone can pursue. There are no major rarities in the series. The most expensive ones are the 1979 and 1981 type 2 proofs, and even these are very affordable. The next most expensive coins are the silver proofs issued from 1992 to 1998. Those coins are plentiful and even the semi keys of 1995 and 1997 can be had easily. Finally, Breen reports there is a single example known of a 1977-D quarter struck on a silver clad blank. A complete set of clad quarters including the silver proofs should run about $250.00, well in the reach of almost every collector.

Non-Circular circulating coins.

While most coins produced today are of the usual round shape, many countries issue coins in other shapes. It is the occasional odd shape coin that makes collecting world coins fun. For this article, I have limited the range of coins to those that circulate. This excludes the weird shape coins like the guitar and motorcycle coins of Somalia.

Four sided coins that are not L7. Square coins are a popular shape for collectors. Notable examples are Aruba's 50 cent, 2.5 and 5 Florin. Others are Bahamas' 15 cent, the Bangladesh 5 poisha and Tonga's 1 pa'anga.

Beekeepers would find these six-sided coins interesting. The Belgian Congo 2 Francs, Djibouti 50 cent and the India 20 paise are good examples of this shape. When I first saw a seven-sided coin, it looked a bit lopsided.

The fact that seven does not divide evenly into 360 did not deter many countries from issuing a coin of this shape. England is known for its seven-sided 20 pence and 50 pence coin. Most of the other countries in the British Empire also issue a seven-sided coin.

Some of the eight –sided coins that make me stop and look are from Fiji, 1 Dollar, Malta, 25 cents, and the Yemen 100 fils. Ten-sided coins are a common sight in Argentina (10 peso), Cape Verde 100 Escudos), Hong Kong 5 Dollars) and the Philippines (2 piso).

Not to be out done some countries have a 12- sided coin. They include Canada's 1 and 5 cent, Australia's 50 cent, and the old British 3 pence.

Finally, there are the scalloped edge coins. Most come with either eight or ten scallops. Examples of an eight-scallop coin are the Bangladesh 10 poisha, Ceylon's 5 and 10 cent and India's 4 anna. Specimens of a ten-scallop coin are the Bahamas 10 cent, Cyprus 1 piastre and Iraq 10 fils. I have only listed a few of each shape, as there are dozens of each example available to collect and I do not have the time or space to list them all here.

J. S. G. Boggs

This month's artist of the month is performance artist and currency re-creator James Stephen George Boggs. In 1984 while enjoying a beverage at a Chicago bar he began doodling a reproduction of a dollar bill on a cocktail napkin. The waitress was so impressed with the drawing she offered to take the drawing as payment for the drink instead of the 90 cents the drink cost. This was an epiphany to Boggs who learned he could make money by making money.

Over the next several years, he made many such transactions. He would buy an item for say, $10 with a hand drawn $10 altered slightly from the original showing his sense of humor. The recipient would make change and give a receipt. The drawings would be of one side of the bill only and the back would have Boggs signature and thumbprint. Later he would include videotaping the transaction and return the change and receipt to the seller treating the exchange as not just commerce but also performance art. It did not take long for both the art and numismatic communities to discover Boggs work and actively seek his drawings. Even though Boggs would not sell his work directly to collectors he would say where and when he made a deal, and the collectors could talk to the sellers themselves. As his works gained in popularity the prices of his drawings rose steadily. The current exchange rate for a Boggs note, so to speak, is about $10 American for $1 Boggs.

Unfortunately, these actions also attracted the attention of the Secret Service and similar agencies in England and Australia. Boggs has been arrested and tried several times for counterfeiting but has been acquitted each time. The Secret service seized many of his drawings and Boggs is still trying to get them returned. Today Boggs no longer hand draws his notes but instead uses a computer to produce his bills. The most notable ones were for a recent Florida

United Numismatists convention. He also has moved to producing plastic copies of Sacagawea dollars. These reproductions consisting of a set of six varieties sometimes appear on eBay.

Liberty Dollars

Established in 1998 the National Organization for the Repeal of the Federal Reserve Act or NORFED and its founder Bernard von NotHaus conceived a barter system of currency to compete with current U. S. currency. Originally issued in gold and silver coins along with paper currency the exchange rate was set at one liberty dollar per one-dollar U.S. At first, the values of the coins were $10 for a one-ounce silver coin and $500 for a one-ounce gold coin. In 2005 as the price of metals rose, the coins were revalued at $20 for a silver ounce and $1000 for a gold ounce. Fractional silver pieces were soon added including a half ounce $10, a quarter ounce $5 and a 1/20 ounce $1.

The coins were made available to NORFED members at a discount to face value but a premium over bullion value. They could then take the coins and notes and spend them at businesses who agree to accept liberty dollars at full face value. NORFED also offered its members warehouse certificates of actual gold and silver bullion held in storage that can be redeemed for U.S. currency or bullion. From the start, NORFED had a tense relationship with the FBI and Treasury department. These disputes escalated until they reached a head on November 15, 2007, when the FBI raided NORFED’s headquarters and seized all coins, dies, script and computers. Charges still have not been filed and NotHaus has offered to be arrested so this case can be brought to trial. He also filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of NORFED and its members to recover their assets and

advised those who placed orders not yet filled to cancel their credit card purchases so they would not lose their money.

Ever since the raid Liberty dollars have become hot collectables. Many of the one-ounce silver coins are selling for substantial premiums over face value. The most popular ones have the image of presidential candidate Ron Paul. His likeness appears on gold, silver, and copper coins along with his campaign slogan vote for truth. Artistically there is good and bad about the designs of the liberty dollars. The standard obverse features a nice portrait of Liberty, the date and the words liberty and trust in God. The standard reverse has an illustration of a torch but is cluttered with a lot of writing including NORFED's phone number and website. For variety, there are over 40 variations of the reverse. Some reverses honor states, countries, restaurants, and events. The strangest is a commemorative for chiropractic medicine. Now you can spend quasi money on quasi medicine.

Two cent pieces

Born from the coin shortage of the Civil War the Two cent piece was one of the shortest-lived denominations in U.S. history. Struck for ten years from 1864 to 1873 the coin was popular when first released but fell out of favor once the war ended. The coin came into existence as part of the law that changed the composition of the cent form copper-nickel alloy to a bronze alloy. The two-cent piece is 23 mm in diameter and weighs 6.22 grams, exactly twice the weight of the cent. Designed by James Longacre this coin is the first to feature the motto "in god we trust." The idea for adding a motto mentioning a supreme being was the idea of Rev. Mark R. Watkinson of Ridleyville, PA. The Reverend felt the inclusion of such motto would raise the spirits of the people

depressed by the war. Rev. Watkinson did not actually coin the phrase “in god we trust” that phrase was derived from the motto of Brown University, which is “IN DEO SPERAMUS.” That translates into “in god we hope.” Variations of this motto were discussed including the motto “god our trust” before finally deciding on the motto as it appears today. The new motto became popular and was included in new coins as they were designed. By 1908, despite objections from President Roosevelt, the motto became mandatory on all silver and gold coins and in 1955 mandatory on all coins. The Indian head nickel holds the distinction of being the last coin not to have this motto.

The obverse design of the two-cent piece is like the shield nickel except for the motto placed on a ribbon above the shield in place of a cross. The motto tends to wear off quickly like the dates of the Indian nickel and standing liberty quarter. Also on the obverse is a pair of arrows and olive branches.

The reverse of the coin has a large number 2 above the word cents surrounded by stalks of grain, either wheat or rice, surrounded by the words united states of America.

Collecting the two-cent piece is best suited to intermediate to advanced collectors. The complete set consists of 13 coins, 12 if you exclude the 1867 double die. There are four major varieties in the series. They are the 1864 large and small motto and the 1873 open and closed 3. The shape of the inside of the D in God determines the large and small mottos. The large motto has a tall inner portion while the small motto is more rounded. The open and closed 3 is easily determined. Grading this coin is tricky. The main grading area is the motto and how many words of the motto can be read. Secondary grading areas are the leaves and lines in the shield. Values for a 12-coin set are in MS60 $13,000, MS 63 $15,000 and MS65 $42,000. Proof coins generally fall in the $2,000 to $4,000 range with the 1873 varieties going for $3,500 to $6,000 and the 1864 small motto proof being the major rarity of the series at $75,000.

The Richmond, Virginia $10 of 1864

This month's currency of the month is the T-68 Confederate note also known as the seventh series $10 from Richmond, VA. This is one of the most common of the 70 or so Confederate notes available. By the time this note was issued the Confederacy was beginning to decline and its money was slowly losing value. The economy of the south was in trouble and prices of everyday goods were rising quickly. Just before the end of the war a bar of soap could cost as much as $50 and a new suit sold for $2,700 in Confederate money. After the end of the war all Confederate currency became worthless. Most of the bills were discarded but many were kept mainly by those who believed the south will rise again.

When the south began issuing paper money in 1861 there were many challenges to overcome. One was the lack of trained engravers and printers another was obtaining a quantity of quality paper to print on. Many times, they used whatever paper was available including the backs of previously printed broken bank notes. At first Confederate notes were printed on one side only but as printing techniques improved both sides of the bill were used. Given these difficulties it is amazing the Confederacy was able to print about $1.7 to $2.0 billion dollars in notes.

Design wise the Confederacy produced some interesting designs with very artistic vignettes. The bill featured this month is printed in pink and black on the obverse. The bills are hand numbered and signed. The main vignette shows a team of horses towing a cannon into battle. Also on the obverse is a portrait of R. M. T. Hunter. Mr. Hunter was a senator from Virginia and a speaker of the house before the war. His image is a common one on Confederate notes. The obverse of the bill also has an interesting statement. The statement reads "Two years after the ratification of a treaty of peace between the Confederate States and the United States the Confederate States of America will pay the bearer $10.The reverse of the bill is printed in blue ink and features an ornate design with both the word and number ten featured prominently. Keating & Ball of Columbia, SC printed the bill. Collecting this bill is easy even for beginning collectors. A good example costs about $15, a nice high-grade circulated piece will run about $25 and an uncirculated specimen about $50.

Presidents on U. S. coins 1900-2008

Starting in 1900 when the U. S. mint began placing portraits of presidents on our coins no fewer than 16 presidents have appeared on 91 different coins. In compiling this list, I have only included basic types not including alloy changes and minor varieties. Also, I am only counting coins issued through 2008. As the presidential dollar series progresses the list will become longer. Lastly the list also includes multi presidential coins such as the Mt. Rushmore coins.

George Washington leads the list with 59-coin appearances. His image is on the quarter, bicentennial quarter, all 50 state quarters including both sides of the New Jersey and South Dakota quarter, sesquicentennial half dollar, 250th anniversary half dollar, Mt. Rushmore half dollar, Lafayette dollar, Mt. Rushmore dollar, presidential dollar, Mt Rushmore five dollar and 200th anniversary of death five dollar.

Next on the list is Jefferson. His image on coins precedes Lincoln by six years with the Louisiana Purchase one dollar. He is also on the nickel, peace medal nickel, keelboat nickel, bison nickel, ocean in view nickel, new Monticello nickel, South Dakota quarter, Mt. Rushmore half, dollar, five dollar, 250th anniversary dollar and presidential dollar. Abe Lincoln is on the wheat cent,

memorial cent, Illinois and South Dakota quarters, Illinois half and Mt. Rushmore half, dollar and five dollars. James Madison appears on four coins. They are the Bill of rights half, dollar, five dollar and presidential dollar. James Monroe and John Q. Adams share the Monroe doctrine half and are separate on their own presidential dollar.

William McKinley appears on two gold coins, one for the Louisiana purchase and one for his burial site in Ohio. U. S. Grant has his own half dollar and dollar coin. Eisenhower is on three different dollar coins, the regular issue the bicentennial dollar and centennial of his birth dollar. The latter has two portraits of him on the obverse. Teddy Roosevelt also appears on all three Mt. Rushmore coins previously mentioned while Franklin Roosevelt is on the dime and a five-dollar coin.

John Kennedy is on the half dollar and bicentennial half and the presidential dollars of John Adams, Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren complete the list.

Most of these coins are easily affordable to the average collector. Some of the early commems such as the Lafayette dollar and gold coins are more difficult.

A small harvest of wheat (cents)

For about the last year I have searched the change drawer where I work for whatever wheat cents I could find. Each day I would look through 1-5 rolls of cents. Most days there were none to be found and some days I would find up to 4 or 5 in a roll. When I did find a wheat cent, I would swap it out with a memorial cent to keep the drawer balanced. When I stopped looking, I found I had a total of 207 wheat cents. Here is what I found.

From 1909 to 1958 not counting varieties there are a total of 140 date-mintmark combinations. Out of that I found 57 different or about 41% of a complete set. Broken down by mintmark I found 95 from Philadelphia, 93 from Denver and 19 San Francisco. When I break the finds down by decade, I discover 5 from 1909-1919, 7 from 1920-1929, 15 from 1930-1939, 92 from 1940-1949 and 88 from 1950-1958. The coins found were mostly in nice condition. When I sort the coins by grade, they come out to 10 in AG, 6 in Good, 65 Very Good, 53 Fine, 51 Very Fine and 22 Extra Fine.

My searches were not limited to cents. While looking I found some other interesting coins. Over the last year I found about 3 ounces of silver in the form of dimes, quarters, and war nickels. Other interesting US coins found are a 1976 cent with the outline of Nevada. Some interesting nickels found are two dateless buffalos and several Jefferson's with mintages under 25 million. They are 1942-D (13.9 million), 1947-S (24.7), 1950-P (9.8), 1951-D (20.4) and 1958-P (17.9).

Foreign coins showed up on occasion. I ignored most Canadian cents but kept a few interesting ones. Those are George 6 cents from 1945 and 1950, Elizabeth 2 cents from 1954, 1961, two 1967. In addition, I found coins from twelve other countries. The countries are Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, Panama, and Spain. Finally, I found a mint medal from a Denver mint set.

Here is a date-by-date breakdown of the cents I found. 1912-P 1930-P !940-D 1945-P 1950-P1955-D 1916-P 1930-P1940-S 1945-D 1950-D1956-P 1918-P 1934-P1941-P 1945-S 1951-P 1956-D 1919-S 1935-D1941-D1946-P 1951-D1957-P 1925-P 1935-S1941-S 1946-D 1951-S1957-D 1926-P 1936-P1942-P 1947-P 1952-D1958-P 1927-P 1937-P1942-S 1947-D 1953-D1958-D 1928-P 1938-P1944-P 1947-S 1953-S 1929-P 1939-P1944-D 1949-P 1954-D 1929-S 1940-P1944-S 1949-D 1955-P

Proof Jefferson nickels 1938-1964

This month's set of the month is my registry set of proof Jefferson nickels from 1938-1964. The nickels are a portion of my full Jefferson nickel set. I have already certified the proofs in the set but not all were by PCGS. The first thing I did was set up a registry account and register the PCGS coins in my set. Then

over the course of a few months I replaced the non-PCGS coins with PCGS coins. When I finished the set achieved a ranking of 29 out of 84 sets. The way PCGS ranks sets is they give the coins a weighting factor based on the rarity of a coin in the set. The weight factor of the coin is then multiplied by the numerical grade to give a score. The score can be augmented by strike superlatives such as full bands or cameo proofs. The scores of the coins are totaled and an average grade and rank is determined. The net score and grade of my set is 66.058. Here is my set by date.

1938 proof 66 1939 proof 66 reverse of 1938 1940 proof 65 1941 proof 66 1942 proof 66 type 1 1942 proof 65 type 2 1950 proof 66 1951 proof 65 1952 proof 66 1953 proof 66 cameo 1954 proof 66 cameo 1955 proof 67 1956 proof 67 1957 proof 66 1958 proof 66 1959 proof 67 1960 proof 67 cameo 1961 proof 66 1962 proof 68 cameo 1963 proof 68 cameo 1964 proof 68

In a few months I will write about the other registry set I am working on, Roosevelt dimes 1950-1964. Any other member who has a registry set is invited to write about it and I will publish it here.

1846 Half Dime

This month’s coin of the month is the 1846 half- dime, part of the Seated Liberty series of 1837- 1873. The coin was designed by Christian Gobrecht and measures 15.9mm and weighs 1.3 grams of 90% silver. The mintage of this coin is a mere 27,000 pieces making it one of the key coins of the series. The E-Gobrecht newsletter rates the coin as the number one coin in the entire Seated

Liberty series. They state due to the coins small size it is relatively unpopular and undervalued compared to the other Seated Liberty coins. Most coins extant are lower grade and pieces grading over very-fine are very scarce. Both PCGS and NGC have certified a total of three mint state coins with the finest a mint state 63. Values for this coin according to the PCGS price guide are Good $550, Fine $1,000, Extra Fine $4,000, About Uncirculated $7,500, Mint State 60 $12,000 and Mint State 63 $22,000. In 2006 an AU55 coin sold in a Heritage auction for $6,325 and on August 10, 2008, a damaged coin with a hole once worn on a charm bracelet sold for $15.00.

1809 Half Cent

This month's coin of the month is the 1809 half cent. The half cent is the smallest denomination coin the United States has produced. The coin began in 1793 but by the end of the war of 1812, it had lost much of its purchasing power. When the series ended in 1857, the coin was practically useless. Most collectors only collect this coin as a type but some attempt to complete a full set despite some exceptionally low mintages. During the peak of production, most mintages were in the 200,000 to 600,000 range. In the 1850's mintages dropped to about 50,000 per year. This brings me to this month's coin, the 1809 issue. I chose this coin for two reasons; first reason is next year it turns 200 years old and second it is the highest mintage of all the half cents. A mintage of 1.15 million may seem tiny by today's standards, but in 1809 it was considered huge. People criticized the coin design by John Reich at the time calling liberty "Reich's fat mistress".

Around the portrait is the word Liberty and the date. The reverse features a wreath with the denomination half cent inside. Under the wreath is a fraction 1/200 and around the wreath is United States of America. The coin is pure copper and weighs 5.44 grams and is 23,5 mm in diameter (about the size of a quarter). Every half cent was struck in Philadelphia. Values for the coin from the PCGS price guide are VG-$52, Fine-$69, VF-$100, XF-$175, MS60-$750 and MS65-$6,500. NGC has graded one coin MS66.

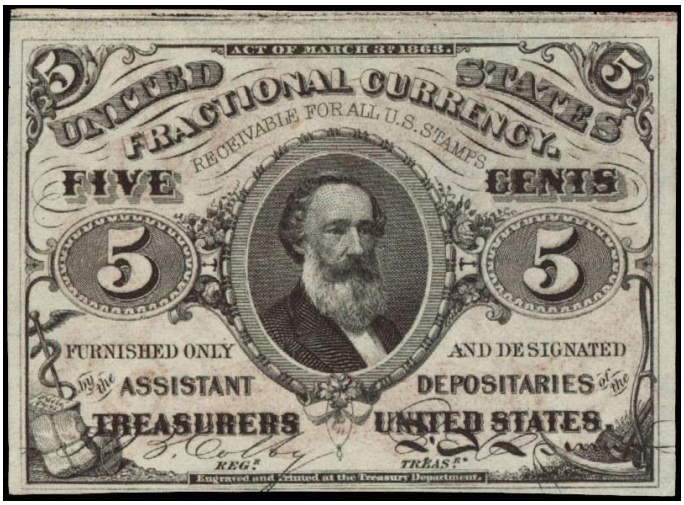
Fractional Currency

This month's currency of the month is the fractional currency notes issued from 1862 to 1876. In 1862 the Civil War was just a year old and people unsure of the outcome began hoarding coins causing a nationwide shortage. Private interests tried to help the situation by issuing tokens and using postage stamps encased in holders as currency. Congresses solution to the problem was to issue paper money in amounts less than a dollar. First called Postal currency and later fractional currency the notes helped ease commerce and were redeemable at post offices in amounts less than $5.00. Issued in five series the notes were printed in denominations of 3c., 5c., 10c., 15c., 25c. and 50c. The first issues were sold in sheets that had perforations like stamps and could be detached easily to make change. This method did not last long as the production equipment had trouble keeping up with demand. Later issues were issued on nonperforated sheets and had to be cut by scissors.

Due to the small size of the notes, there was not a lot of room for artistic expression. Some notes were as small as an inch and a half by almost two

inches. Early issues used current stamps as the main design. Later issues had portraits of presidents Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln. Other vignettes include images of Liberty and Columbia. The most unusual portraits are those of Lincoln's cabinet and Treasury officials. Spencer Clark, Robert Walker, Edwin Stanton, Samuel Dexter, William Crawford, and F. E. Spinner all had their images on fractional currency. The reverses of the notes are plain and functional with ornate denominations and legal wording on the issue and redemption of the notes. Over the years of production, the Treasury issued about $360 million worth of fractional notes. According to the treasury there are still about $2 million worth unredeemed. Soon after their release it did not take long for counterfeiters to get in the act. The treasury eventually issued a framed shield showing all 39 types of fractional currency. Those shields are prized collectables today with prices ranging from $2500 to $6000. Many shields were damaged at the Treasury and were issued as such.

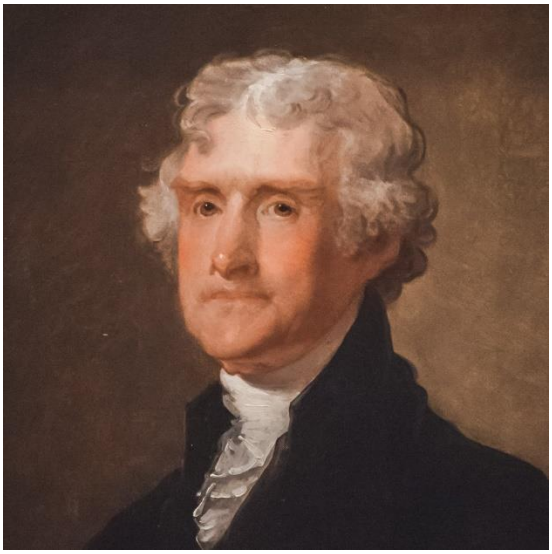
Collecting fractional currency is something every collector can do. Common notes on good or better condition run about $10. Better condition notes can cost about $50 and uncirculated notes run in the $100 to $200 range. Those wanting a comprehensive set better to have some deep pockets as some varieties can run several thousand dollars.



Jefferson's proposed coinage system.

In the early days of the republic the issue of what kind of money to issue was being debated. The system suggested by Jefferson is like our current system with a few differences. According to Jefferson a new coinage system must meet

three criteria. First, that it be of convenient size to be applied as a measure to the common money transactions of life. Second, that its parts and multiples be in an easy proportion to each other as to facilitate the money arithmetic. Finally, the units or parts and divisions be so nearly to the value of some known coins as they would make easy adoption by the people. According to Jefferson the coin that best fills these conditions is the Spanish dollar. As part of his proposal Jefferson suggested the dollar be divided into multiples of ten. He believed this would be easier to learn and compute as opposed to the British monetary system. The denominations first proposed by Jefferson were a $10 gold coin, a silver dollar, a silver 1/10 dollar equal to a Spanish bit also known as a half pistareen and a copper 1/100 coin. He later amended the list to include a silver half dollar, a silver 1/5 piece called a pistareen and a copper 1/20 piece. Ironically when England adopted a decimal system in the 1970's they used most of the denominations suggested by Jefferson. Today England issues a 1,5,10,20 and 50 pence coin along with a pound coin. Lastly Jefferson warned against issuing paper money calling it "ghost money."



The bald Eagle

Since 1794 the Bald eagle has appeared on most American coins with a denomination of 25 cents or more. Over that span of time the depiction of the eagle has varied greatly due to the skill of the designer and the artistic sensibilities of the time. Some coins show the eagle in full flight. The best examples of this style include the St. Gaudens's double eagle, the Standing liberty quarter, and the Sacagawea dollar. In the 1880's the prevalent depiction

of the eagle is having the eagles breast covered with a shield and carrying arrows and an olive branch in its talons. Examples of this style are the Seated liberty halves and dollars of the 1840's to 1890's, the gold Liberty coins of the same era and most recently the Kennedy half. Another popular pose for the eagle is perched on rocks or tree branches as seen on the Peace dollar, the Walking liberty half and some platinum bullion coins. Some designers took artistic liberties with the eagle and chose an art deco style as seen on the Bridgeport and Connecticut halves. The eagle has also been to the moon as seen on the Eisenhower and Susan Anthony dollars. Not all depictions of the eagle have been flattering. Look at the halves and dollars of the 1790's. The eagle on those coins looks somewhat scrawny and the eagle on the Franklin half is just filling space. Today with the continuing quarter commems, the presidential dollars and the new Sacagawea reverses the eagle now appears on one circulating coin, the Kennedy half.

Binion's Silver dollars

This month's coins of the month are the Morgan and Peace dollars stolen from casino owner Ted Binion after his death. In the 1940's Benny Binion began hoarding silver dollars for use in his casino. Instead of using the coins in the casino they were stored away in vaults. Eventually the coins were passed to Ted who added to the hoard and even built his own underground vault outside Las Vegas. In the late 1990's Ted became romantically involved with Sandra Murphy who later moved into his home. A few years later she became involved with Rick Tabish who she met thru Ted and helped him build his vault. In 1998 Sandra found Ted unresponsive in their home and he later died from an

apparent overdose. Las Vegas police investigated the incident and found the vault had been cleaned out.

Prosecutors charged Sandra and Rick with causing Ted's death and brought them to trial. The first trial ended with a guilty verdict that was later overturned at a second trial. The exact circumstances of Ted's death are still unknown. When the coins were recovered, they were sold to Goldmine, Inc., who paid 3 million for the hoard of just over 100,000 dollars. Goldmine then sent the coins to NGC to be graded and encapsulated. As part of the deal between NGC and Goldmine, NGC would make a special insert to distinguish the Binion coins from other coins. The insert features three cowboys riding and a map of Nevada. A lot of the coins were still mint state and received grades up to MS68. Other coins received no grade, just a note they were genuine and were part of the Binion collection. Binion pedigree coins bring a slight premium over the price of regular dollar coins but are still affordable. A Binion coin will cost from $40 to several thousand depending on the grade of the coin.

Susan B. Anthony dollar

This month's coin of the month is one of the least popular coins issued by the U.S., the Susan B. Anthony dollar. In 1978 President Carter signed public law 95-447 calling for the minting of a small sized dollar coin. Chief engraver Frank Gasparro was charged with the task of designing the new coin. His original design was a portrait of liberty with flowing hair and a flying eagle on the

reverse. Those designs were discarded when the government mandated that the obverse should feature a portrait of Anthony. Gasparro then came up with an accurate portrait of Anthony and a recycled version of his Ike dollar reverse. The coin was released on July 2, 1979, in Rochester, N. Y. After a brief rush by the public to acquire the new coin, it fell out of favor. The main complaint was it was remarkably like the quarter and started calling the coin the “Carter Quarter.” The dollar is 26.5 mm and weighs 8.1 grams while the quarter is 24.3 m and weighs 5.67 grams.

The mint anticipated a large demand for the new coin and struck a total of 758 million coins in 1979 at all three mints. This is the first dollar coin to have a “P” mintmark and the first “S” mint coin struck for circulation since 1974. When it became apparent the coin would not circulate the mint cut production in 1980 to about 90 million and 10 million in 1981. All 1981 coins went into mint and souvenir sets. After 1981 no dollar coins were struck until 1999 when the needs of the vending industry depleted the reserves. By the end of the ‘90’s vending machines took larger denomination bills and gave change in dollar coins. To meet the new demand the mint resumed production of the Anthony dollar until the Sacagawea dollar was ready.

Collecting the Anthony dollar is an easy task for a YN and a challenge for an expert. The basic set consists of 15 coins and there are three major varieties. The varieties are the 1979 near date, the 1979-S, and 1981-S Type 2 proofs. Anthony dollar specialists look for well-struck coins with full eagle talons on the reverse. The major grading services do not recognize this variety yet. A basic set will cost about $80-100 and a full set with all varieties will run around $450-500.

1992 Columbus commemoratives

This month's coins of the month are the 1992 Commemoratives honoring the 500th anniversary of Columbus' first voyage to the New World. In 1892 the Mint issued a pair of commemorative coins for the 400th anniversary. A century later the mint issued a three-coin set consisting of a half-dollar, a silver dollar and a five-dollar gold coin.

The half-dollar is struck in the usual clad composition also used for Kennedy halves. The obverse shows Columbus walking on shore with his crew in the background and his ship offshore. The reverse shows all three of his ships, the Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria. T. James Farrell designed both sides of this coin. The silver dollar is struck in the same silver composition of the Morgan dollar. The obverse shows Columbus standing near a globe with his ships above and behind him. The reverse has a split image of the Santa Maria and the Space Shuttle Discovery. John Mercanti designed the obverse and Thomas D. Rogers designed the reverse.

The five-dollar gold coin is the same size and weight as the half eagles struck from 1839 to 1929. The obverse shows a profile of Columbus looking at a map of the New World. The reverse shows the Spanish crest of the Admiral of the Ocean Sea. Like the dollar, John Mercanti and the reverse by Thomas D. Rogers designed the reverse. Since there are no known portraits of Columbus made during his life all images of Columbus are speculation by the artist. The mint issued the coins in various packages in both proof and uncirculated versions.

Mintages for each coin as follows. Half dollar 135,718 unc 390,255 proof Dollar 106,949 unc 385,241 proof Five dollar 24,329 unc 79,730 proof According to Coin values the half lists for $13 in both unc and proof. The dollar is worth $37 unc and $42 proof. The $5 gold lists for $400 unc and $260 proof.

Mexican one-peso coins 1957-1967

This month's coins of the month are the silver one-peso coins issued in Mexico from 1957 to 1967. The subject of the coin is Jose Morelos Y Pavon. Morelos was a Catholic priest who became a military leader in the revolt against Spain in the early 1800's. After leading several successful military campaigns and assisting in drafting Mexico's declaration of independence he was captured and executed by Spanish forces as a traitor against Spain. The people of Mexico still revere him as a national hero and patriot.

The obverse features a portrait of Morelos circled by a wreath and the OM mintmark of Mexico City. There is no other writing on the obverse. The reverse features the familiar seal of Mexico that is an eagle perched on a cactus holding a snake in its beak encircled by a wreath. Around this are the words Estados Unidos Mexicanos, Un Peso and the date. Physically the coin measures 35 mm in diameter and weighs 16 grams. Metallically the coin is composed of mostly copper-nickel and 10% silver. The actual silver weight is .0514 oz, so it is technically a silver coin.

Collecting this series is an amazingly easy thing. Mintages of these coins range from 5 million for the 1965 to over 61 million for the 1962. Most coins in the series can be bound in dealers junk boxes priced at bullion value that is currently in the 60 to 70 cent range. Some scarcer dates may cost a dollar to a dollar and a half. Uncirculated examples are a little more expensive. The average cost is about $2 to $4 except for the 1957, which will cost up to $7.

Stone Mountain half-dollar.

This month's coin of the month is the 1925 Stone Mountain commemorative half-dollar. The purpose of the coin was to raise funds to carve a memorial to southern civil war heroes on the side of Stone Mountain near Atlanta. The

sculpture designed by Guston Borglum shows the portraits of Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee, and Jefferson Davis on horseback. In 1925 congress authorized the mint to strike up to five million coins with the Stone Mountain theme. Borglum also designed both the obverse and reverse of the coin.

Minting began on January 21, 1925, the 101st anniversary of General Jackson's birth. The government supplied the coins to the Stone Mountain committee at face value and they resold the coins for $1 each. Despite some creative marketing the coin sales were less than expected. Only 2,314,709 were struck with 1,000,000 melted later leaving a net mintage of 1,314,709. By the 1930's there were still many coins left over the banks released them into circulation at face value just to get rid of them. Meanwhile the mountain remained un-finished and remained so until it was finally finished in 1970.

The design of the coin differs from the mountain in two ways; the first is the coin only shows Generals Lee and Jackson and second the poses of the Generals are different. The obverse also features the words, Stone Mountain, In God We Trust, 1925 and thirteen stars, one for each state of the Confederacy. The reverse shows a majestic eagle circled by the words, Memorial to the valor of the soldier of the south, United States of America, e pluribus unum, liberty and half dollar. Sprinkled in the field are stars some can be seen clearly, and some are faint.

The Stone Mountain half is one of the most affordable of the early commemoratives. XF/AU pieces can be had for under $50. Mint state examples will range in price from $90 to $250 in grades of ms60 to ms65. The highest certified coins are six ms68's graded by PCGS. When the coins were released, some were counter stamped with state initials and numbers. Original counter stamps bring a premium, but you should be careful as they can be easily counterfeited.

$3 Gold coin

This month's coin of the month is the $3 Indian Princess gold coin. For 35 years the mint produced this somewhat un-popular coin in lesser quantities than the other gold coins of the period. The main justification of the denomination is its tie in with postal rates of the time. A sheet of 100 stamps cost $3.00 and the $3 coin is an easy multiple of the 3c. coin and 3c. fractional note.

Designed by James Longacre, the coin features a portrait of liberty wearing a feather headdress of an Indian princess. The model was most likely Longacre's daughter, who five years later would model the Indian on the cent. Around the portrait are the words, Unites States of America. The reverse has a wreath of Cotton, Corn, Tobacco and Wheat. Inside the wreath is 3 Dollars and the date. The mintmark appears on the reverse below the wreath. Physically the coin weighs 5.015 grams of .900 gold and .100 copper and is 20.5 mm in diameter (the same as a nickel). During its production run the mint struck a total of about 535,000 coins. Mintages range from a high of 138,000 in 1854 to a low of 1 in 1870 (San Francisco). Most coins were struck in Philadelphia with very few struck at branch mints. Dahlonega and New Orleans made some in 1854 and San Francisco struck some in 1855, 1856, 1857, 1860 and 1870.

Collecting $3 gold coins requires deep pockets. A low grade circulated coin will cost about $500 or more, a mint state coin can run $5,000 and up and a gem uncirculated coin can cost $30,000 or more. This series also contains one of the great rarities of American numismatics, the 1870-S. The coin is considered unique and on the rare times it goes on sale usually sells for a million or more.

1896 Educational Notes

This month's currency of the month is the series of three silver certificates issued in 1896. Known as the educational series, the notes came in denominations of $1, $2, and $5. Regarded as some of the finest notes this country has produced, they caused some controversy when they were released.

The one dollar note shows a reclining female figure representing history embracing a young male representing youth. History points to a view of Washington D.C. as seen from Virginia with the Capitol building and Washington monument featured. To the right is a large book opened to the first part of the U.S. constitution. On the front of the lounge are statements pointing out that there is deposited in the treasury a silver dollar payable to the bearer on demand along with the signatures of the Treasurer and Secretary of the Treasury. Around the edge of the note from lower left to lower right are the names of 23 noted Americans circled in wreaths. Some of the names listed are Washington, Jefferson, Grant, Franklin, Lincoln, and Jackson. Behind the youth, partially hidden is a faces like the one used on the dime 20 years later. The reverse has the portraits of Martha and George Washington separated by a large ornate number 1 with the word one across it. This was the basis of a joke at the time stating no1 (one) should ever come between George and Martha. Included in the ornate engravings on the reverse is a disclaimer common to all three notes. It states, "This note is redeemable for customs, taxes and all public dues, and when so received may be reissued." The reverse also shows a pair of allegorical figures with wings, perhaps another inspiration for the winged liberty dime.

The Obverse of the $2 has a group of five figures representing science presenting steam and electricity to commerce and industry. Across the top of the bill are the words "This certifies that there has been deposited in the treasury of the United States." Moving to each side of the figures the phrase continues "two silver dollars payable to the bearer on demand." The signatures of the Treasurer and Secretary of the Treasury appear near the bottom of the note. The reverse of this bill also shows a pair of portraits, this time Robert Fulton, and Samuel F. B. Morse. Amid the elaborate scrollwork are the words silver certificate, two dollars and the number 2. The standard disclaimer also appears.

Finally, the obverse of the $5. This note is the most controversial of the three. The main theme of this note is electricity. The main figure holding the light bulb is electricity, the other figures are Jupiter representing force and Fame with her

trumpet representing the progress of the nation along with a dove of peace. The controversy came from the lack of clothing of some of the figures, especially electricity. The public outcry about this note foreshadowed a similar controversy 21 years later with the Standing liberty quarter. The obverse also has wording like the $1 and $2 concerning the treasury having enough silver dollars to pay the bearer on demand along with the signatures of the Treasurer and Secretary of the Treasury. In most of the corners the denomination is shown as a 5 and the letter V. The reverse of the bill again features two portraits, this time General Grant and General Sheridan. Between them is a large allegorical figure with wings behind a shield with a large V. In the ornate background there are the words United States, silver certificate the number 5 and the standard disclaimer. The treasury seal on all notes is red and the serial numbers are blue.

Collecting these notes is not cheap. There are 7 notes in a complete set based on signature combinations. The combinations are Tillman-Morgan and Bruce-Roberts on all three and Lyons-Roberts on the $5 only. According to the 2010 black book of currency the $1 is worth $350. in good, $1,200 in VF and $3,800 uncirculated. The $2 is worth $300 in good, $1,450 in VF and $4,500 in uncirculated. The $5 is worth $385 in good, $2,200 if VF and $8,500 in uncirculated. Choice uncirculated pieces can go for much more. Collectors on a budget can obtain reprints by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing at a national show or from eBay.

2009 Professional life Lincoln cent

This month instead of writing about a coin or currency, I will be discussing the release of the third 2009 Lincoln cent. Early in the morning of August 13, Eagle, his friend Amy, and I set out for Springfield. After a four-hour drive and a break for breakfast, we arrived at the Old State Capitol building at about 9 a.m., an hour before the ceremony began.

When we arrived, a sizeable crowd had already formed. Those in charge of crowd control began setting up a serpentine line inside the courtyard so everyone in line had a view of the stage where the ceremony took place. Just before the ceremony the crowd was serenaded by the Lincoln Troubadours while performers portraying Lincoln and citizens of ante bellum Illinois wandered about. At the start of the ceremony, a color guard of civil war re-enactors presented the colors as the crowd recited the pledge of allegiance. This was followed by a particularly good rendition of the national anthem by Debbie Ross. Soon the dignitaries took the stage, each giving a (thankfully) short speech. The main speakers were Timothy J. Dalvin, Mayor of Springfield, Senator Dick Durbin and Ed Moy, Director of the Mint.

When the ceremony ended, the fun began. Since this is the third cent release, the mint has practice handling large crowds. The line of people waiting for coins lead to a tent where a mint worker directed people to one of six cashiers. The minimum purchase was two rolls and a maximum of six rolls per trip in line. My first time through I tried to pay with a Presidential and Sacagawea dollar, but was told no coins would be accepted. I thought this was strange since the mint spends so much trying to get us to use dollar coins would not accept them. Fortunately, I had ample cash to make four trips through the line while Eagle and Amy made five. Just minutes after Eagle got his last coins the supply ran out with about 200-300 still in line. Various crowd estimates range from 2,000 to 5,000 in attendance. Standing in the crowd, I feel an estimate of 2,500 to 3,000 was more accurate. Just outside the fence a person was offering $10 a roll but was already gone by the time I decided to sell some rolls. The next goal for Eagle and me was the Post Office to have our rolls stamped and cancelled. After a short two block walk, we found ourselves in a line of about 70 people. While there the Post Office announced there was a limit of six rolls that can be cancelled at a time. The most popular stamp used was the new Lincoln series of 42 cent stamps that required an additional 2 cent stamp before the Post Office would cancel them. When it was our turn Eagle had six rolls done and I had four. Four and a half hours and a nice dinner on the road later we were home. Was it worth it? You betcha! Over the next week or so while monitoring eBay, I noticed the plain rolls selling for $5-10 on average and the stamped rolls $15-25.

1796 Quarter Dollar

This month's coin of the month is the nation's first quarter issued in 1796. Authorized by law in 1792, the coin was not struck for four years due mostly to lack of demand and high demand for halves and dollars. The design of the coin was credited to Robert Scott, but the actual artwork was based on a design by Gilbert Stuart's portrait of Philadelphia socialite Ann Bingham. When Stuart saw the result, he was disappointed by Scott's lack of talent in executing his art. The fact Stuart was the source of the portrait was mostly unknown till the 1880's when the original drawings were found. Still this portrait of liberty is far superior to the previous depictions of liberty. The portrait was also incorporated in other silver and copper coins of the period.

The obverse of the coin also has the word Liberty, 15 stars, one for each state in 1796 and the date inside a denticle rim. The reverse of the coin has a mediocre depiction of an eagle. The body of the eagle is well proportioned, but the neck is too long, and the head is too small for its body. The full impression is that of a snake stuck on the body of an eagle. The bird is perched on what some consider clouds, but I think they are rocks. Around the eagle is a wreath and around the wreath is United States of America. There is no denomination on the coin. Several features contribute to the coin's popularity. It has a low mintage of 6,146, it is a first-year issue and is a one-year only type. The physical parameters of the coin are 27.5 mm in diameter and 6.74 grams of .8924 silver and .1076 copper. The dimensions are like the Spanish 2 reales that circulated in the US till the mid 1800's.

There are two main varieties of the coin, the high 6 and the rarer low 6. Many of the high-grade specimens are known to exhibit proof like surfaces. At one time Col. H. R. Green had about 100 mint state specimens. Those coins were dispersed in the 1940's for $95 to $125. Today collecting this coin is a task for the big boys. A good example starts at $11,500. Higher grade examples go for $26,000 in fine, $83,000 in MS 60, $105,000 in MS 63 and $300,000 in MS 65.

Walking Liberty Half Dollar

This month's coin of the month is the Walking Liberty half dollar. In the first years of the 20th century President Roosevelt embarked on a mission to improve the quality of our coinage. The result is some of the finest coins this country has produced. Some of the coins to emerge from this reform were the Indian nickel, Winged Liberty dime, Standing Liberty quarter, St. Gauden's and Pratt's gold coins and the Walking Liberty half. In addition to being works of art the designs of the coins were also political statements to the rest of the world. Adolph A. Weinman, a student of St. Gauden's, designed both the half and the dime. The obverse of the half features a full-length figure of liberty draped in a flag and carrying a bunch of oak and laurel branches. Liberty is shown striding to the sunrise reaching to the east (Europe?). Around the top is liberty, behind the leg is in God we trust and the date is on the bottom. Some have said the face of liberty is the same as the face on the dime, perhaps the same model? The reverse features a majestic eagle perched on a rocky crag preparing for flight. A mountain pine sapling is seen emerging from he rocks. Around the top is United States of America, the denomination as across the bottom and e pluribus unum is just above the sapling.

Struck in the standard coin silver alloy of 90% silver the coin weighs 12.50 grams and contains .36 oz. Silver. The diameter is 30.6 mm and has a reeded edge. During its issue, the coin was struck at the Philadelphia, Denver and San Francisco mints. In 1917 and part of 1917 the mintmark appeared on the obverse below the motto. Starting mid 1917 the mintmark was moved to the reverse just below the sapling. No halves were struck in 1922, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1930, 1931 and 1932. A complete basic set of halves contains 66 coins.

Assembling a circulated set takes some work but can be done. Most dates if fine run under $50 but there are some tough dates. The big keys are 1916-S, 1917-D and S Obverse, 1921-P D and S and1938-D. Putting together a high-grade mint state set is an exceedingly difficult task. Most coins of the series suffer from weak strikes. The weakness is most evident in the left hand. The hand is aligned with the highest point of the reverse and there is not enough metal to flow to that area. Between 1917 and 1927 many coins sell for more than $10,000 in MS65 and the 1919-D and 1921-S each sell for well over $100,000. As an alternative some people just collect the short set of coins issued 1941-1947. The keys to this set are the 1941 and 1942-S.

2009 Lincoln Chronicles set

This month's set of the month is the 2009 Lincoln Chronicles set. Earlier this year the Mint struck 500,000 Lincoln Silver dollars. Out of that mintage, 50,000 were asset aside for this set. The remaining coins quickly sold out. Proofs outsold the BU specimens by a ratio of about 3 to 1. Prices quickly rose for a few months but have come down a bit recently. Today you can easily find one in the $60 to $70 range. Late in the summer, the Mint announced plans to produce this set. The set includes the Lincoln dollar and proof versions of the four 2009 Lincoln cents in a deluxe package. Marketing researchers at the mint realized this set with an extremely low production would sell out quickly. To make sure as many different people received a set a limit of one per household was devised. When the set went on sale the mints phone lines were jammed and the web site experienced very heavy traffic. In about a day all 50,000 sets were ordered. The mint then set up a waiting list in case some orders were rejected. It was through this waiting list I received my set.

This set is an example of what the mint can do when they put forth an effort. The set is in a book like holder encased in a slipcover. Inside is a portrait of

Lincoln, A facsimile autograph, the Gettysburg address in Lincoln's handwriting along with the coins. The Lincoln dollar is the proof version, and the four cents are struck in the original alloy of 1909. The alloy is .95 copper, .03 zinc and .02 tin. Within a day or so after the coins were shipped, they began appearing on eBay. Early sales ranged from $160 to $180. Soon prices began to drop and now sell in the $125 to $140 range. Some sets have sold for a little more and some sold a little less.

Cameo proofs

This month's coin of the month is not a specific coin or a series of coin but a type of coin, cameo proofs. Cameo proofs are created by early strikes of proof dies. The first strikes exhibit the strongest cameo contrast. The contrast gradually decreases as coins are struck eventually fading to no cameo contrast at all. Before the mid 1970's the mint was somewhat unconcerned with whether or not a proof had a cameo effect. Since then most proofs produced are almost all ultra-cameos. Today it is the exception to find a brilliant proof coin. Cameo proofs are some of the most beautiful coins the mint has produced. A nice cameo proof can make even ordinary coins look exceptional.

One example is the barber coinage. A gem deep cameo proof from this series is a special coin indeed. While cameo proofs today are quite common and can be purchased for about a dollar, those from the mid 1960's or earlier are much rarer and can bring significant and can bring significant premiums. I have selected five series to discuss the difference in values from brilliant to ultra-cameo proofs. All values come from the PCGS price guide, and all are for MS 65 quality coins.

Indian head cents are extremely rare in deep cameo proofs. They are so rare the PCGS price guide only lists a few dates. Common proofs range from $1000 for a brilliant to $2000 for a cameo to $6500 deep cameos. Winged Liberty dimes are scarce in cameo and so rare in deep cameo they are not even listed. Common brilliant proofs are valued at $275, and cameos are $1500. The difference in prices for Barber quarters in brilliant to deep cameo proofs is very slight. If a common brilliant proof goes for $2000 a deep cameo will sell for about $3000. As with the Winged Liberty dime PCGS does not assign values to deep cameo Walking Liberty halves. Common brilliant proofs are listed at $650 while cameos are $3000. Finally, Franklin halves are easy to find in cameo and deep cameo. Prices range from $30 in brilliant to $85 for deep cameo.

Inexpensive gold coins

With the recent run in the price of gold, many people are looking to add some to their collections. The problem is most people cannot afford $1,200 or more for a one-ounce bullion coin. The good news is there are many options to purchase small gold coins up to a quarter ounce for $350 or less. Several countries have issued bullion coins with purity of .9999 or better in both 1/10 ounce and ¼ ounce.

Some of the more popular ones are the American Eagles, Canadian Maple Leaf, Chinese Pandas and Austrian Philharmonics. As popular as these coins are they are not the best buys for those looking for cheap gold. According to Numismatic News the 1/10-ounce American Eagle has a bullion value of $110.00 (as of 1/26/2010). This coin has a market price of $147.00. The quarter ounce eagle

has a bullion value of $275.00 and a market value of $313.00. Of course, it is possible to purchase for a bit less, but you will be paying a significant premium over bullion value. Coins with a better bullion/selling price ratio are regular issue coins struck by the U.S. and some foreign countries. One of the cheapest American gold coins based on bullion value is the Liberty $5 gold coin. Containing .242 ounce of gold the coin has a bullion value of $266.00 and can be purchased for $275 to $300. Other good buys in American gold coins are the modern $5 commemoratives. These coins also contain .242 ounce of gold and most sell for $260 to $280.

Many foreign gold coins are also good buys for the budget minded collector. Mexico has several choices including a 2 peso, 2 ½ peso, 5 peso and 10-peso coins. They contain gold ranging from .048 to .241 ounces. The 2 peso contains $53.00 in gold and sells for $62 to $65. The 10 peso has $265.21 in gold and sells for about $291.50. Several European countries issued similar sized coins to make foreign exchange easier. France, Belgium, Italy, and the Netherlands all issued coins weighing .187 ounce worth $205.37 in gold. Depending on the country they all retail for about $225.00. The popular English Sovereigns are a bit larger at .235 ounce worth $258.94 in gold and usually sells for about $275 to $280. These are just a few of the many coins to choose from, but this is a good place to start.

Images of Lincoln

This month’s coins of the month are the various coins issued since 1909 featuring our 16th president Abraham Lincoln. Back in June 2008 the coins of the month were a survey of all presidents on US coins. This month I will go into more detail on just the coins showing Lincoln including those from the last two years. Since 1909 there are 9 distinctly different portraits of Lincoln on 12

different coins. The first is one of the most familiar images in numismatics, the obverse of the Lincoln cent. This image created by Victor Brenner is still in use over 100 years later even with a few minor tweaks over the years. Some think this is the most reproduced image on coins while others believe it is the image of Queen Elizabeth II.

In 1918, Illinois celebrated its centennial. To mark the occasion the mint issued a half dollar showing a clean-shaven Lincoln. The next image of Lincoln appeared in 1959 for the 150th anniversary of his birth. This image is hard to see as it is part if the Lincoln memorial design on the reverse. In 1991, Mt. Rushmore turned 50 years old. The mint issued a three-coin set consisting of a clad half, a silver dollar, and a gold five-dollar coin. I count these coins as one image since the source is a singular work of art. The clearest depiction of Lincoln on these coins is on the dollar coin. In 2006 the Mt. Rushmore theme was used again, this time on the South Dakota quarter. That was not the first time Lincoln appeared on a state quarter. In 2003 the Illinois quarter showed a reproduction of a statue of Lincoln in Springfield, IL. 2009 was a banner year for new Lincoln coins. That year the mint issued a new silver dollar for Lincoln's bicentennial. The coin was extremely popular and sold out quickly at the mint. There was also a series of four cent reverses depicting different eras of his life. Only two of these designs showed Lincoln, the second with him reading a book and the third showing him delivering a speech.

Finally, this year Lincoln will be depicted on the presidential dollar series. The release date should be sometime in October. Assembling a set of Lincoln images should pose no challenge to an intermediate collector. Of all the coins mentioned the two most expensive ones are the 1918 half and the gold $5. A complete set should cost no more than $600.

1916 Standing Liberty Quarter

This month's coin of the month is the 1916 Standing Liberty quarter. In surveys of the country's best coins, the Standing Liberty quarter almost always comes in the top 3 or 4 designs. During his presidency, Teddy Roosevelt sought to improve the look of our circulating coinage. By lay the design of a coin can be changed after 25 years unless otherwise instructed by congress. The Barber quarter first issued in 1892 became eligible for change in 1916. During that year, several artists submitted designs and the one submitted by Hermon A. MacNeal was chosen.

The design created by MacNeal was both bold and innovative. The central figure of Liberty is shown standing wearing a loose-fitting gown exposing her right breast in what today would be called a wardrobe malfunction. In her left hand is a shield and in her right an olive branch. Liberty is facing east perhaps making a statement on America's policy concerning the war in Europe. The word Liberty circles the top of the coin around her head. Across the middle is in God we trust, there are two vertical columns totaling 13 stars on each side of her legs and the date appears below her feet. The reverse shows an eagle in full flight. Above and between the eagle's wings are the words United States of America and E pluribus unum. Behind the eagle are seven stars while six shine before him. Below the eagle is the denomination, quarter dollar.

Physically the quarter is standard size of 24.3 mm in diameter and 6.5 grams of .900 silver and .100 copper. The 1916 issue only has a mintage of 52,000 making it one of the lowest mintages of circulation coins in the 20th century. The date on this issue was raised and wore off quickly. Even so, with no date it is possible to determine if this is a 1916 or 1917. Some diagnostics include folds of the gown, position of the head, hair detail and detail of fingers and toes.

Collecting this coin is something for only the very well off. Values for the coin from Coin World are as follows, Good-$2,750, Fine- $7,000, Extra Fine-$11,000, MS60- $15,000, MS63-$17,000 and MS65Full Head-$35,000. Over the years many people have made Silver rounds, tokens, and exact size replicas of this coin. Many can be found very inexpensively.

Coins of the 1920's

This month's coins of the month are the coins issued by the US mint from 1921-1930. Embracing the vision of President Teddy Roosevelt, each denomination from the cent to the double eagle is superior to the design that preceded it. Examining each design will show this to be true. The closest comparison is that of the Lincoln wheat cent and the Indian head cent. In all fairness, I must call this a tie. On the other hand, the wheat reverse is more attractive than the following memorial reverse.

In the five-cent category the Indian/buffalo design is superior to both the V and Jefferson nickels. The Indian design is so popular the mint reused the image in 2001 on an extremely popular silver dollar commemorative. The beautiful designs of the winged liberty dime, standing liberty quarter and walking liberty half far outshine Barbers bland designs as with the succeeding designs of the Roosevelt dime, Washington quarter and Franklin half. It is a shame the mint only issued 11 date/mm combos of the walking liberty half in the 1920's. Perhaps the mint was too busy making the many commemorative half dollars issued that decade. Decades later, the mint re-used the obverse of the half on the silver eagle.

Some may disagree with my next choice, but I prefer the design of the peace dollar to the Morgan dollar. Between the peace dollar and the IKE dollar, there is no comparison. In gold coins, the story is much the same. The $2.50 and $5.00 designs by Bela Pratt are better than the Liberties that came before, likewise for the St. Gaudens' $10 and $20. The design of the $20 was also reused by the mint, this time on the gold eagles. I hope someday the mint can

produce coins of this quality again, but judging by the mint's recent efforts, I will not hold my breath.

Special Mint Sets 1965-1967

This month's coins of the month are the Special Mint Sets issued 1965 to 1967. Each set contains five coins, cent thru half dollar struck better than ordinary coins but not to the standards of true proof coins. These sets were issued during the so-called coin shortage of the 1960's. Both the government and the mint blamed collectors for the shortage claiming collectors were hoarding coins. Some of the actions the mint took was to remove mintmarks and institute a date freeze. They also announced they would not sell mint and proof sets to the public. It did not take long for consumer complaints to persuade the mint to reconsider. As part of a compromise, the mint came up with the concept of the special mint set. The coins were struck with polished dies on regular planchets once only under higher-than-normal pressure. They were then dumped into bins and sent to packaging. This explains why some SMS coins show small nicks.

In 1965, the sets were sold in packaging like previous proof sets. The set also included a small plastic token identifying the set. The 1966 and 1967 sets were sold in hard plastic cases with no token. All three years the mint charged $4.00 per set with a maximum order of 50 sets. Despite a price increase of $1.90 over recent proof sets, the mint sold 2.3 million SMS sets in 1965. By 1967, sales dropped to 1.8 million. In 1968, the mint conceded the coin shortage was over and resumed using mintmarks and offered mint and proof sets.

Collecting special mint sets is something every collector can participate in, from beginner to advanced. Complete sets are plentiful and anyone walking into a bourse with $30 can easily find all three sets and leave with change in their

pocket. Intermediate collectors, especially those building registry sets, will seek out higher grade singles. Coins with strong cameo contrast are especially desirable. The finest of these coins can bring several thousand each. Even though these coins are not actually proofs, both PCGS and NGC require SMS coins as part of their proof registry sets. For the truly advanced collector there are the 1964 SMS coins. 1964? Yes 1964! When the mint was experimenting with ways to process SMS coins, they struck some coins with 1964 dies and planchets. Experts estimate there are about 20 to 30 of each denomination. Prices range from about $1,000 for a SP63 quarter to $25,000 for a SP68 half.

Oregon Trail Memorial Half

This month's coin of the month is the Oregon Trail memorial half dollar. Issued sporadically from 1926 to 1939 this coin is considered on of the most attractive coins issued by the Mint. Issued to honor the settlers who traveled west on the Oregon Trail, the coin was designed by the married couple James and Laura Fraser. The side designed by James shows a pioneer family traveling west in a covered wagon pulled by two oxen. The other side, designed by Laura, has a very buff Native American holding a bow and greeting the settlers coming from the east. His image is superimposed over a map of North America. There is some debate over which side is the obverse. The designers and many collectors believe the Indian side is the obverse. The official stand by the Mint, which I agree with, is the wagon side is the obverse.

The wagon side has the motto in God we trust and the date, both commonly found on US coin obverses. The Indian side has United States of America and the denomination, both usually found on the reverse. The act authorizing the coin, passed on May 17, 1926, called for a maximum mintage of six million

coins. In 1926, 148,000 were struck and offered to the public at $1 each. The Philadelphia mint struck 48,000 and San Francisco struck 100,000. Almost all Philly coins sold and 83,000 from San Francisco sold. The remaining coins were melted. The next issue was in 1928 when Philadelphia struck 50,000. These coins sold poorly at the new price of $2 and 44,000 were eventually melted. No coins were struck till 1933 when Denver issued 5,000 coins. An additional 7,000 coins were struck in Denver in 1934. Almost all coins sold out. 1936 saw production return to Philadelphia and San Francisco where 17,000 sold at a reduced price of $1.60. Denver resumed production in 1937, selling out the year's production of 12,000 coins.

In 1938, the Mint began selling the coins in three-coin sets costing $6.50. The last year of issue, 1939, were also sold as sets, this time costing $7.50. Speculators quickly grabbed all 6,000 1938 sets and 3,000 1939 sets. Collecting Oregon Trail halves are well within the means of intermediate and advanced collectors. The 1926 issues are common for early commemoratives. A nice MS63 example can be bought for $175 to $200. It is slightly more difficult to assemble a complete 14-coin set. The set in MS60 will cost about $4,000 and in MS65 will run about$6,750.

Fort Knox Bullion Depository

This month's bullion depository of the month is Fort Knox. Constructed between 1933 and 1937 at a cost of $560,000 the purpose of the building was to hold the gold bars made from coins confiscated from the American public. The facility is located about 25 miles south of Louisville, Kentucky. Made of granite and reinforced steel, the building resembles a turtle in the middle of a field. The main vault door weighs 22 tons and like the recipes of Coke and Kentucky fried chicken, no single person knows the entire combination to the lock. It takes ten

people to open the lock with each person entering his part. Over the years, the vault has contained items other than gold bars.

During WWII, the vault protected foreign gold, original copies of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Magna Carta, and the crown of Saint Stephen. Recently the vault has housed the 12 gold Sacagawea dollars and the ten 1933 St. Gaudens double eagles currently awaiting litigation. Current gold reserves in the vault total about 147.4 million troy ounces. At a current spot price of gold about $1200, the gold is worth over $176,880,000,000. If anyone has thoughts of stopping by and making a withdrawal, I will strongly advise against it. Security there is so tight not even Danny Ocean and his crew could break in. If a squirrel tried to bury an acorn on the grounds, guards inside would know about it. Nothing short of a Presidential order can get you past the front gate. In 1974, to battle rumors there was no gold inside, the doors were opened to a group of reporters and senators. They were given a tour and determined the gold was indeed there.

Even if someone got inside, opened the vault, and loaded the 58,000 bars, there is the matter of getting away. Near Fort Knox is an Army base where they train tank operators. The firepower there is more than enough to protect the facility from almost any attack. Finally, it is not commonly known that during WWII the vault contained a large amount of morphine and other similar drugs in case supplies from Asia were cut off. With the advent of synthetic drugs, most of these drugs were removed.

1968 Illinois sesquicentennial

This month's medals of the month are the medals issued to commemorate the sesquicentennial of Illinois in 1968. Fifty years earlier, the mint issued a half dollar for Illinois centennial. Since then, several states issued commemorative coins for various anniversaries before the mint suspended the commemorative program in 1954. By 1968, there was almost no choice if issuing a commemorative coin so the people in charge of the sesquicentennial program chose to issue a series of medals. The committee decided to issue six medals in two sizes struck in silver and bronze.

The first issue consists of two medals designed by Gilroy Roberts, best known for the obverse of the Kennedy half. The obverse shows a large jet airplane flying eastward above a covered wagon pulled by oxen going westward. Behind these images is a map of Illinois. Around the edge is the inscription, Illinois sesquicentennial, 150 years of progress and the dates 1818, 1968. The reverse is a reproduction of the state seal of Illinois.

The second issue has four pieces. Two measuring 38mm, the same as the first issue and two measuring 68 mm. Each size was struck in silver and bronze. This design was created by Elgin artist Trygve Rovelstad and is more complex than Roberts' design. The obverse also has a map of Illinois as a background. Superimposed over the map is a partial Chicago skyline featuring the Hancock tower, the Water Tower, and Marina City. Other images are Fort Dearborn, a farmer plowing his field, a train, an Indian teepee, and a man splitting a log. The last image is assumed to represent Abraham Lincoln. Around the edge are the inscriptions 1818 Illinois 1968 and sesquicentennial.

The reverse also shows the Illinois state seal but with a twist. The twist is the seal is smaller than the diameter of the medal. Placed in the open area are 21 stars representing Illinois status as the 21st. state. Assembling this set should provide little challenge to complete, as the medals are readily available. I was not able to confirm the original issue price of the medals, but similar medals issued in 1971 sold for $35 for the large silver, $10 for the large bronze, $6 for the small silver and $1 for the small bronze. The small silver medals were struck with a brilliant proof like finish while the large silver has a matte antique silver finish. Like many such issues, once everyone who wants one has one the demand dries up leaving dealers with unsold inventory. Many dealers received a windfall in 1980 when silver hit $50 an ounce and many silver medals were melted. The large silver medal weighs a bit over 4 ounces and melted for $200

and the small silver was worth about $50. Today the medals are more affordable. The large silver sells for between $80 and $175. The small silver goes for $15 to $25. The large bronze sells for $20-$30 and the small bronze $2 to $10. A complete set can be put together, including a custom holder for $140 to $175.

1796-1797 Bust Half dollars

This month's coins of the month are the half dollars of 1796 and 1797. These are some of the very rarest coins produced by the US mint. In the two years there were three varieties issued. The 1796 half has either 15 or 16 stars on the obverse and the 1797 has 15 only. The Red book lists the mintage of all three coins at 3,918 combined. In his book, Breen broke the mintage down as follows, 1796 934 for both types and 2,984 for the 1797.

The obverse of the coin, designed by Robert Scott, shows a very busty version of liberty. The design was taken from a drawing by Gilbert Sullivan of Philadelphia socialite Ann Bingham. Above the portrait is the word Liberty and the date is below. Around the left and right side are stars. On 15-star coins, the ratio is 8 left and 7 to the right, on 16-star coins its 9 left and 7 to the right. The reverse, designed by John Eckstein, shows a young eagle perched on some rocks with its wings partially spread. Circling around the eagle is a wreath of palm and laurel branches. Around the wreath are the words United States of America and below the wreath is the denomination ½. There are also words on the edge like the current dollar coins. The wording on the coins is 50 cents and half a dollar among some decorations.

One odd thing is why the 1796 has a 16-star variety and the 1797 only has 15. One theory is some obverse dies were made with the date 179_ and the last date omitted. In 1796 when Tennessee became a state, a new obverse die was made to honor the event. When it came time to strike 1797 coins, they went to the

unused 179 15 star dies and just punched in a 7. Now for the hard part, collecting these coins. Being a two-year type and a low mintage coin means even low-grade coins are very expensive. Surviving population estimates for each coin are 100 1796 15 stars, 50 1796 16 stars and 200 1797. Values for each coin are remarkably similar. Coins graded good are worth $30,000, in fine condition $60,000, In about uncirculated $200,000 and $300,000 in MS 60.

1967 Canadian centennial coins

Canada loves circulating commemorative coins. Since the 1940's they have issued quite a few, too many to mention here. This month I will concentrate on the coins issued in 1967 for Canada's centennial. In 1964, a competition was announced seeking designs for each circulating coin. The submission period ended March 31, 1965. After a review of all submissions, the entries of Alex Coville were selected for all coin's cent thru half. The design for the dollar was credited to both Coville and Myron Cook. For each design, the prize awarded was $2,500 Canadian. What follows is a description of each coin in the set.

The obverse of each coin features the second effigy of Queen Elizabeth II. Around the portrait is her name and an abbreviated Latin motto, D. G. REGINA. This translates to Queen by the grace of God. The one cent coin features a rock dove in flight. The designer said this bird was chosen to represent peace. Physically the coin measures 19.05 mm in diameter and weighs 3.24 grams of .98 copper, .005 tin and .015 zinc. Above the bird is 1 cent and Canada 1867-1967 below. The same reverse writing is the same on all other coins except the denomination.

The five-cent coin shows a rabbit hopping or running. Colville said he chose this animal as a symbol of fertility or new life, sort of like the Easter bunny. This coin measures 21.21 mm and weighs 4.84 grams of pure nickel. The ten-cent coin, the smallest one, shows a mackerel chosen for its sleek clean lines. 18.034 mm in diameter and weighing 2.333 grams of .80 silver and .20 copper. This leaves a net silver weight of .06 oz. At current silver price of about $26.00 the coin has a melt value of about $1.56. The 25-cent coin shows a bobcat in pursuit of prey. Perhaps he is hunting the rabbit on the 5-cent coin since both images are heading in the same direction? This coin is 23.88 mm and weighs 5.83 grams of .80 silver and .20 copper. The ASW is .15 ounce and is worth $3.90.

The fifty-cent coin has a wolf howling at the moon. This symbolizes the vast wilderness of western Canada. This coin is 29.72 mm and weighs 11.66 grams of the same silver alloy as the previous two coins. The ASW is .30 ounce and is worth $7.80. Finally, the dollar coin shows a flying Canadian goose. This bird is one of the most recognized symbols of Canada. This large coin is 36 mm and weighs 28.33 grams of the same 80% silver alloy. The ASW is .60 ounce and is worth $15.60. Some error coins of this denomination were double struck giving the impression of a diving goose. All in all, the set contains 1.11 ounce of silver and as a set sells for a small premium over silver value. Some high-grade singles have sold for much higher prices. There are special sets from the Canadian mint that contained a $20 gold coin. In 1967 it was exceedingly difficult to import the gold coin to America due to gold ownership laws. This did not deter some from smuggling some across the border. The gold coin is a little over a half ounce and today sells for a small premium over melt.

Gold, Silver or Platinum

This month instead of a coin or currency of the month, I will propose a new contest for the club. Since 2003, I have supervised a fantasy coin contest. That contest had players use $25,000 in play money to purchase coins and the values were tracked over the course of a year. The person with the greatest increase won a prize. I have decided to end that contest for two reasons. First, there was the lack of participation. Most years there are only 5 or 6 players. The other reason is an inconsistent access to monthly price updates. Some months I did not receive a new price guide until after the meeting.

This year's contest is an easier one. Each player is given $50,000 in play money to invest in Gold, Silver or Platinum. At the January meeting I will have the current spot prices for all three metals. All the players must do is select one of the three metals. They also must guess the spot price of gold at the December meeting in case there is a tie. I will then take the play money and divide it by the spot price to calculate the number of ounces purchased. The day before the February meeting about 5 pm, I will look up the spot prices and convert the ounces back to play dollars. At the February meeting, I will announce any increase or decrease, and each player has the choice to keep what they have or change to either of the two other metals. If they choose to keep the same, then the ounces they had before will just carry over. If they choose to change, I will take their current play money and divide it by the spot price to get a new number of ounces. This process will be repeated each month till December when the person with the biggest profit will receive a prize. If you cannot make a meeting and want to change, you can email me at the club's website, ecc@worksandwords.com or leave a message on the clubs Facebook page.

Finally, there is no cost to participate, and you might just win a prize.

Editor's note, the website is no longer active.

Statues on coins

This month's coins of the month examine the use of statues as design elements on U.S. coins. The dictionary defines a statue as a freestanding, three-dimensional work of art. This excludes some coins such as the Mt. Rushmore and Stone Mountain coins as they are carved on the side of mountains. This still leaves 17 different statues on 25 different coin types.

The first coin is the Lafayette dollar. This coin shows the French General on horseback. The next one is the St. Gaudens $20 gold coin based on a statue near a military monument in New York City. The coin is slightly different from the statue in that the statue holds a wreath instead of a torch. The same design was reused on the gold bullion coins starting in 1986. 1925 brought about the Lexington Concord half dollar. This coin shows the minuteman statue that can also be seen on the Massachusetts state quarter. Three circulating coins from 1932 to 1948 each bear designs derived from busts carved during the subjects' lifetime. Those coins are the Washington quarter, Jefferson nickel and Franklin half.

Commemorative coins are a prime source of statue-inspired coins. In addition to those already mentioned, there is the Columbia, SC half, the Elgin Half, the 1984 Olympic Dollar, the 1989 Congress bicentennial set, the 1999 Pennsylvania quarter and the 2005 Marine Corps dollar.

Two statues on three coins portray President Lincoln. The Illinois state quarter shows a young Lincoln from a statue in Springfield. The Lincoln memorial cent and 2009 Lincoln dollar shows two views of the statue in the Lincoln memorial. Lastly, the most popular statue on US coins is the Statue of Liberty. This iconic landmark is shown on the 1986 Statue of Liberty set, the 1997 to date Platinum bullion coins, the New York quarter, and the current Presidential dollar series.

Assembling this type of set is an achievable goal for most intermediate to advanced collectors. The most expensive coin is the Lafayette dollar at about $2,000 in ms63. The next most expensive coins are the gold and platinum bullion and St. Gaudens gold, these three will cost between $1,500 to $1,800 each. The cost of the Columbia, Elgin and Lexington halves range from $150 to $350. The modern Commems can be bought for $10 to $350. The low price is for the half dollars and the high price is for the gold. All the other coins can be found for 50 cents to $15 each. A complete set can be assembled for around $8,000.

1848 CAL. $2 ½ Gold

This month's coin of the month is the 1848 $2.50 gold with the CAL. Counter stamp. The story of this coin began on January 24, 1848, when James Marshall discovered gold in the American river near Sutter's Mill. As word spread hordes of men came to California to stake their claim and make their fortune. In December of that year, California Military Governor Col. R. B. Mason sent about 230 ounces of gold to the Philadelphia mint. The gold was to be used to first strike medals for Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott. All remaining gold was to be used to strike quarter eagles. To differentiate these coins from other quarter eagles, the mint punched CAL. on the reverse just above the eagles' head. All three letters were struck with a single punch because all genuine pieces are identically punched with letters equally spaced. The coin was also punched while resting on the obverse die since there is no flattening on the obverse opposite the punch area. If anything, there is more detail there due to forced metal flow. This is also a way to detect faked coins since coins flattened when punched outside the die.

Another diagnostic is the period is square shaped. From the remaining gold after the medals were struck, the mint coined 1,389 quarter eagles. Although it is not the rarest in the series the notoriety of the stamp makes the coin extremely popular. Some collectors consider this coin the nation's first commemorative. As such, the coin commands remarkably high prices. Prices range from $21,000 in good to $195,000 in MS65. The finest known example, graded MS68 star by NGC sold for $402,000 in 2005.

Web Press Notes

This month's currencies of the month are the notes printed on an experimental web fed press in the 1990's. The bureau of Engraving and Printing came up with this method as a way of printing more notes faster and cheaper. Unfortunately, as most government projects go, this one ended up costing more than it saved and was discontinued. The regular way of printing notes is a three-step process. First the fronts are printed, then the backs and finally the seals and serial numbers. The printing is done one sheet of 32 notes at a time at a speed of 8,000 sheets an hour.

The web press was supposed to print notes from a continuous roll of paper remarkably like how newspapers are printed. On this press, both sides are printed at the same time at a speed of 10,000 notes in 35 minutes. While good in theory, the actual result was less than optimal. The press has a habit of breaking down often and the results were less than pristine.

Production began in 1992 with the 1988A series dollar bills but by 1996, the BEP Concluded the experiment was a failure and ceased production. During this experiment, the BEP printed 309.12 million web notes. The easiest way to spot a web note is the reverse. On regular notes the plate number is below the E in one. On web notes the plate number is above the E in one.

There are many ways of collecting web notes. The most basic way is a note from each series printed. The first series is the 1988A with signatures of Villalpando and Brady. The second series is 1993 and is signed by Withrow and Bentsen and the third series, 1995 is signed by Withrow and Rubin. The next level of collecting is a note from each Federal Reserve Bank in each series. The 1988A series was issued by Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Richmond, Atlanta, and Chicago. The 1993 series was issued through New York and Philadelphia. Lastly the 1995 series was issued by Boston, New York, Cleveland, and Atlanta. The next level of collecting is by blocks. Blocks are the letters before and after the serial number. For example, the 1988A Boston had blocks A-E, A-F and A-G. Other 1988A blocks are New York B-L, Philadelphia C-A, Richmond E-I and E-K, Atlanta F-L, F-M, F-N, F-U, F-V and F-*, Chicago G-P and G-Q. In 1993 the blocks are New York B-H and Philadelphia

C-A. Blocks from 1995 are Boston A-C and A-D, New York B-H, Cleveland D-C and Atlanta F-D.

Since the average lifespan of a dollar bill is 18 months, web notes still in circulation are scarce. The most common notes are worth from $7.50 in VF to $20 in uncirculated. Notes from 1988A range from $10 to $65 in VF to $40 to $135 uncirculated depending on the block. The two keys are the 1988A New York B-L valued at $275 in VF to $1,250 uncirculated and the only star note, series 1988A Atlanta valued at $500 in VF to $1,250 uncirculated.

1955 Double Die Cent

This month's coin of the month is the double die cent of 1955. On some double die coins, you need an electron microscope to see it, not with this coin. The doubling on this coin is so pronounced a person with even average eyesight can see it without magnification.

In the 2010 edition of the 100 greatest U.S. coins, the 1955 Double die cent is ranked number 57. In the fall of 1955, a mint worker misaligned the master hub between impressions creating the doubling effect. Legend says on a night shift that die was put into use striking an estimated 40,000 pieces. When the error was discovered, about 24,000 coins were dumped into a bin containing 10 million coins. The mint caught and destroyed 16,000 pieces and rather than

waste time searching for the other coins they decided to ship them out. Most of the coins ended up in upstate New York and Massachusetts. Many people found the coins inserted in packs of cigarettes purchased in vending machines. Back then, a pack of smokes cost 23 cents. When a smoker dropped a quarter in a vending machine, he got a pack with a small slit cut in the cellophane and two cents inserted for change.

Out of the 24,000 released an estimated 18,500 still exist in all grades. Collectors in 1955 did not pay much attention to errors calling them freaks. In the first year after it was discovered the coins sold for a dollar or two. As news of the coin spread, demand rose, as did the prices. The coin made its first appearance in the 1960 Red Book valued at $30 in xf and $50 unc. By 1962 values rose to $175 and $275. Today the coin is valued at $1500 in fine, $1800 in xf, $2,000 in au, $2,500 in ms60 and $4,000 in ms63. The finest coins graded by PCGS are 18 pieces graded MS 65 red and are valued at $40,000. Since the coin is an error coin it is not mandatory for a complete Lincoln cent set, but it does make a nice addition.

1936 Canadian Dot Cent

This month’s coin of the month is one of the great rarities in Canadian numismatics, the 1936 dot cent. The story of this coin begins in early 1936 with the death of King George V. Since the 1936 cents had already began production, the custom was to continue using the design for the rest of the year while dies for the new King are prepared for use the following year. Things changed in December when Edward VIII gave up the throne to marry Wallace Simpson. Since the dies scheduled for use in 1937 were now useless, the Canadian mint decided to keep using the 1936 dies with a slight alteration. A small dot was

added to the reverse below the date below the 9 and 3 of the date. A similar tactic was used on the dime and quarter.

In the time between the start of the year and the completion of dies for the new King, the Canadian mint struck 678,823 dot cents. None of the None of the coins were released and are believed to have been destroyed at the mint. Today there are 3 known examples. All are graded either proof-like or specimen. John Jay Pittman owned all three coins from 1961 to the late 1990's. After being auctioned separately in 1997 and 1999, all three coins command great attention when they are auctioned off. The most recent sale was in 2010 when the finest known piece, graded MS66, sold for over $400,000.

Aside from the added dot, the coin is a standard small cent of the era. The coin is 19.1 mm in diameter and weighs 3.24 grams of bronze. The obverse shows the portrait of George V by E. B. Mac Kennal. Around the portrait are the words in Latin Georgivs V Dei Gra Rex Et Ind Imp. This translates to George the Fifth, King by the grace of God and Emperor of India. Fred Lewis designed the reverse. In the center is the denomination One Cent. Just above and below this are a left pointing arrow, a dot, and a right pointing arrow. Around the top is Canada, near the bottom is 1936 and to the sides are a pair of maple leafs. Many people have claimed to have found the coin in circulation, but none have been proven to be genuine.

Kennedy halves 2002-2011

This month's coins of the month are the Kennedy halves struck from 2002 to 2011. Between 1964 and 2001 mintages for circulation ranged from a high of 295 million in 1967 to a low of 8.9 million in 1999. The 1970 and 1987 issues have lower mintage, but they are mint set only issues. In 2002 the mint decided to cease striking halves for general circulation and only make enough for sale to collectors in rolls and bags. This decision caused a significant drop in the

mintage of the half dollar. Since 2002 the mintage of half dollars fell to between 1.7 and 3.8 million per date/mintmark combination. The 1.7 million mintages were in 2008 P and D and 2010 D. That mintage is lower than every Franklin half and all but 15 Walking liberty halves.

Even rarer than the regular finish halves are the satin finish halves issued in mint sets from 2005 to 2010. The mint does not count the satin coins as part of the regular mintage but considers them separate issues. Mintage of the satin sets form 2005-2009 average about 800,000 with the 2010 set coming in at 572,000. But what does this mean to the collector? Only moderately popular with collectors, the half is popular with roll searchers looking for silver coins. Perhaps in 2014 when the series turns 50, popularity of the set may rise. If that happens these coins could become semi-keys. Currently the regular finish halves can be purchased for $2 TO $3 each. Satin finish halves cost about $3 to $4. High grade certified pieces sell for between $20 and $30 in MS67.

Trade Dollar

This month the coin of the month is the Trade dollar. Conceived as a means of trade with China, the coin eventually became a source of hardship for bluecollar workers. In China in the early 1870’s the trade coin of choice was the Mexican Peso. To compete, the US had to come up with a slightly larger version of the dollar. Several designs were submitted, and some pattern pieces struck. William Barber created the design chosen. The obverse design is a perfect allegory of the US design to open trade with the east.

The obverse shows a full figure of liberty sitting on a bale of cotton backed with a sheaf of wheat. She is facing west over what appears to be the Pacific Ocean.

In her right hand is an olive branch as a peace offering and her left hand holds a ribbon emblazoned with liberty. Directly below liberty is the motto in God we trust and below that is the date. Thirteen stars form a semi-circle around the upper portion of the coin. The eagle on the reverse is almost a mirror image of the eagle on the seated dollar. The center of the coin features a right facing eagle holding arrows in its right claw and an olive branch in the left. Directly above the eagle is a ribbon saying e pluribus unum and directly below is 420 grains, 900 fineness. Around the top of the coin is United States of America and below is Trade Dollar. The mintmark appears above the D in dollar. A similar eagle also appears on the twenty-cent piece.

Production of the dollar began in 1873 and almost all the first-year mintage went to China. Merchants there were suspicious of the new coins and conducted tests to verify the weight and purity of the coins. When they were satisfied to the quality of the coins, they punched characters in the coin stating as much. Those marks, known as chop marks, can sometimes trace where the coin circulated much like the Where's George notes of today.

Not long after the series began, the price of silver took a big drop. This caused a massive influx of coins back to the US. Soon the coins fell out of favor and traded below face value. In 1876, congress took the radical step of removing the legal tender status of the trade dollar. This did not stop the coin from circulating. Some businesses purchased the coins at less than face value and used the coins to pay their employees at face value. This caused a hardship for the workers who could not deposit the coins at a bank or spend the coins at a shop unless they paid a premium for the goods.

Collecting trade dollars ranges from difficult to near impossible. If a collector just wants a type of this coin a nice XF example and be found for about $150. Assembling a business strike set is difficult but not impossible. The set consists of 18 coins, an XF set is worth about $10,000, and a MS set is worth around $52,000. If one wants to add the proofs this is where it becomes tricky. There are 13 possible proofs. The first 11 are relatively easy to find and are worth between $3000 in PR63 to $11,000 in PR65. This leaves the last two, the 1884 and 1885 proofs. Both coins are classic rarities in numismatics. With mintages of 10 and 5 respectively, when either coin appears in an auction it is a major event. The 1884 has sold for as much as $600,000 and the 1885 has sold over 1 million dollars.

Joseph Barr Notes

This month's currency of the month is the 1963-B $1 Federal Reserve notes commonly known as Barr notes. In December 1968, Henry Fowler resigned his position as Secretary of the Treasury to take a job in the private sector. President Johnson, in his last month in office appointed Joseph Barr as interim secretary. His term only lasted from December 21, 1968, to January 20, 1969. At the time, it was believed Barr's short term would produce a scarce $1 bill variety. Actually, the presses at the bureau of engraving and printing kept turning out Barr notes long after he left office.

When production ended in the summer of 1969, over 458 million Barr notes were printed. During production, the notes were printed for just five Federal Reserve districts. The total printed for each district is as follows. New York 123,040,000 Richmond 93,600,000 Chicago 91,040,000 Kansas City 44,800,000 San Francisco 106,400,000 There were also a significant number of star notes made for each of the above districts except Kansas City. Printing figures are as follows. New York 3,680,000 Richmond 3,040,000 Chicago 2,400,000 San Francisco 3,040,000 Although somewhat scarce in circulation, Barr notes are easily available in uncirculated condition. Regular notes range in value from face value in worn condition to $10 in choice uncirculated condition. Star notes are also worth face value in circulated condition but $20 to $25 inchoice uncirculated condition.

Three key Barber quarters

This month the coins of the month are the last three coins usually added to a Barber quarter set. These dates are the 1896-S, 1901-S and the 1913-S. Barber quarters were struck from 1892 to 1916. In 1891, the mint called for a competition to redesign the dime quarter and half. Charles Barber felt threatened by the possible competition and sabotaged the process ensuring that he would be the person to design the new coins. Barber's coins have been described as bland at best and inspired Teddy Roosevelt to call for design changes as soon as legally possible.

The obverse is a virtual mirror image of the Morgan dollar with some minor changes. He even used the same model, Anna Williams. Above the portrait is in God we trust, and the date is below. Around the sides are 13 stars. The word liberty appears on a headband just below a laurel wreath on the portrait. The overall appearance of the obverse is like Swiss coins of the same period. The heraldic eagle reverse of the dollar coins of the early 1800's inspired the reverse. The design shows a spreading eagle with a shield on its chest. A bunch of arrows is held in one claw and an olive branch in the other. In the eagle's beak is a ribbon saying e pluribus unum. Above the eagle's head are 13 stars and the words United States of America and quarter dollar circle the eagle. The mintmark appears below the tail feathers between the r and d.

Collecting these three coins can be awfully expensive. The 1896 has a mintage of 188,039, the largest of the three. Values for the coin are $2,500 in fine, $5,500 in xf, $12,500 in MS 60 and $60,000 in MS 65. The next lowest mintage is the 1901-S at 72,664. This coin's value is $15,000 in fine, $30,000 in xf, $47,500 in MS 60 and $100,000 in ms65. The rarest in terms of mintage is the 1913-S. This is the lowest mintage of a circulated coin in the 20th century. Collectors at the time must have saved more of this coin as reflected in the coin's values. This coin is worth $5,200 in fine, $10,000 in xf, $16,500 in ms60 and $30,000 in ms65.

1933 British Penny

This month's coin of the month is the key date in the 20th century British penny series, the 1933. That year the Royal Mint decided not to strike pennies due to an adequate supply already in circulation. The only reason any were struck at all was for sets to be placed in foundation stones of buildings, usually by the King. The mint struck an estimated 7 pennies that year. Over the years all the coins have been tracked and the location of six of the coins are known. One coin is in both the British Museum and the Royal Mint Museum in South Wales. One coin is still under a foundation stone at the University of London in Bloomsbury, London. Another is in private hands since it was salvaged from St. Mary's church, Hawksworth Wood, Kirkstall, Leeds. Two have been in private hands since the 1930's. The last one was from the church of St. Cross. When the church was remodeled, someone made off with the coin and it has not been seen since.

When the public learned about the existence of 1933 pennies, they had hopes of possibly finding one in circulation. At that time penny boards were becoming popular, and the prospect of an empty hole in their album was not a pleasant one. For those collectors there are copies available, but it's not quite the same as a real one.

Physically the coin is a standard British penny. The measurements are 31 mm in diameter and weighs 9.4 grams of 95.5 copper, 3.0 tin and 1.5 zinc. The obverse shows the left portrait of George V. Around the portrait is a lengthy Latin inscription GEORGIVS V DEI GRA: BRITT: OMN: REX FID: DEF: IND: IMP. This translates to George V by the grace of God, King of all the Britons, defender of the faith and Emperor of India. The reverse shows a seated figure of Britannia wearing a helmet grasping a shield emblazoned with the union jack. In her left hand is a trident representing Poseidon/Neptune as an allegory to Brittan's Sea prowess. Around the image are the words one penny and the date 1933. Finding the value of the coin is subjective as there are only three available to own. I have seen estimates of 55,000 to 80,000 pounds ($ 86,500 to $126,000). The current Krause catalog values the coin at $100,000. Considering the coins rarity that is not a lot of money.

Hobo Nickels

This month's coin of the month is a form of folk art most often associated with the great depression, the hobo nickel. It is said the word hobo comes from hoe boy; a term used to refer to itinerant workers who carried their possessions tied to their hoe. These workers would travel from town to town seeking work in the fields. During their down time, some artists would use knives, nails, or other objects to alter the features of an Indian head nickel. They would then take these pieces and use them as barter for meals, lodging or other goods. The practice of altering coins this way is not new. In the 1800's people counter stamped coins with advertising or other messages, some coins were made into love tokens and some seated liberty coins were altered into "potty coins."

Several factors made the nickel the coin of choice for these artists. First was the size of the portrait in relation to the size of the coin. Second the portrait was of a man and finally, the low face value and plentiful supply made it appealing. In the 1920's two hobo nickel artists became famous for their superior work. Bertram Weigand, known as Bert, signed his work by erasing the L, I and Y of liberty, leaving his name. He also mentored George Washington Hughes, known as Bo. By the 1940's an improving economy and the new Jefferson nickel caused the practice of carving Indian head nickels to decline.

Over the years since, better tools and techniques allowed those who still practiced the art to make designs that are more sophisticated. They have also expanded the number of different coins used. Today almost any coin is fair game from nickels to Sacagawea dollars. Some artists make dies to overstrike

existing coins with new designs. The Gallery mint has made a series of hobo style nickels struck on Jefferson nickels and some private mints are making Statehood parody quarters. The subject of the alterations is limited only by the imagination of the artist. Artists not only altered the obverse, but some did the reverse, changing the bison to another animal or a person.

Collecting hobo nickels is a mixed bag. Some recent low-quality coins can be bought for $10-$15. Earlier and more complex pieces can sell for hundreds or even thousands of dollars. Bert and Bo pieces generally bring much higher than average prices. For more info and to see many excellent pictures of these nickels go to the original hobo nickel web site at Hobonickels.org.

Three Cent nickel

This month's coins of the month are the 3 cent nickels issued from 1865 to 1889. Near the end of the civil war, small change was still scarce, and this coin was issued to fill the gap. The task of designing the coin fell on James Longacre who used his favorite model, his daughter Sarah. This time, instead of wearing a feathered headdress, she wore a bonnet inscribed with liberty. Circling around the portrait is United States of America and the date. The reverse is very plain. In the center is a representation of the number 3 in roman numerals. The numerals resemble the fluted columns used in ancient architecture. Around the number is a laurel wreath and no writing.

The coin is 17.9 mm, has a plain edge and weighs 1.9 grams of 3 parts copper and 1 part nickel. This same alloy is used on the five cent coins issued a year later. When the coin was introduced, it was well received by people who preferred it to the fractional currency notes already circulating. A decade later as coin populations increased, it fell out of favor. The biggest complaint was it was too like the dime.

Collecting 3 cent nickels is almost a tale of two series. From 1865 to 1876, all coins are readily available with prices ranging from $15 in good to $200 or less in MS63. In 1877 and 1878 only proofs were struck. Circulation strikes resumed in 1879 and except for 1881 the mintages were extremely limited. The 1885 issue has the lowest mintage at 1,000 pieces. The 1884 mintage is 1,700, the 1883 is 4,000 and the 1887 is 5,000. Prices for these rarer dates start at between $200 to $400 in good, rising to between $500 and $1,000 in MS63.

1971 Chicago fire centennial

This month's medal of the month is the 1971 Chicago fire centennial. On October 8, 1871, just after 9 p.m., legend states Catherine O'Leary's cow kicked over a lantern starting the great fire. Fueled by southwest winds and an abundance of wooden buildings, the fire spread as far north as Fullerton Ave. By the time rains came and put out the fire a day and a half later, over 4 square miles of the city was destroyed. Despite the massive destruction only about 300 people died. Years after the event, a newspaper reporter confessed to making up the cow story to sell papers. The true cause of the fire is still unknown but some of the prime suspects are Daniel "Peg leg" Sullivan, some gamblers in a dice game and even a meteorite.

In 1970, the Chicago Historical Society commissioned Trygve Rovelstad to design a medal for the fires 100th anniversary. The obverse shows a then and now scene of Chicago. The foreground shows the fire destroying the First Presbyterian church and the Chicago Historical Society. The Water tower, one of the few buildings to survive in the fire zone is shown standing tall. Behind the fire are several well-known modern Chicago landmarks. Seen are the Hancock building, Marina towers, the First National Bank building and Lake point tower. Above the scene is Chicago Fire Centennial, 1871, 1971 and four 6 pointed

stars. Below on a ribbon is Chicago Historical Society, T. A. Rovelstad 1970. The stars taken from the flag of Chicago represent the Fort Dearborn massacre, the fire, the Columbian exposition, and the Century of progress. The reverse shows the seal of the city of Chicago surrounded by 21 stars. On the seal is written City of Chicago, Incorporated 4th March 1837, and the Latin motto urbs in horto, the city in a garden.

The medals were struck by the Medallic art co. of New York in two metals and sizes. The large silver and bronze medals measure 63 mm. The silver weighs 135.5 grams or 4.36 troy ounces of .999 pure and the bronze weighs 126.9 grams. The small medals are 38mm (silver dollar size). The silver weighs 27.5 grams or .9 troy oz and the bronze weighs 24 grams. When offered for sale in 1971 the silver medals cost $35 for the large and $6 for the small. The bronzes cost $10 and $1. At the time, sales were not great, and a coin dealer bought out most of the overstock. It is possible a large number were melted in 1980 when silver was near $50. The melt value then would have been $218 and $45. Today the four-coin set is worth between $200 and $225.

1991 Canadian quarter

This month’s coin of the month is the 1991 Canadian quarter. Why this particular year? This year the quarter had the lowest mintage of a circulating Canadian quarter since the days of King George V. In an era where the quarter is a workhorse coin with mintages in the multi-millions, the 459,000 mintage sticks out like a sore thumb. One of the reasons for the low mintage is there was a workers strike at the Royal Canadian mint. For reasons known only to the Canadian mint, the cent, nickel, and dime production was unaffected and each

of these coins had a normal mintage in the millions. What is odd is the half dollar had a lower mintage than the quarter that year. I believe since the half was not a widely circulating coin struck only for collectors its rarity is less apparent.

The obverse of the coin features the third effigy of Queen Elizabeth. I believe this image created by Dora de Pedery-Hunt of the four effigies so far. The head is too small in relation to the neck. Both the previous and subsequent effigies are more attractive. Around the portrait is Elizabeth II and D G Regina. The Reverse shows an image of a caribou created by Emanuel Hahn and used since the 1930's. Circling the image is Canada and the date. Placed between the antlers is the denomination, 25 cents. The coin is 23.88 mm and weighs 5.05 grams of pure nickel. Despite its low mintage the coin is easily affordable to any collector. Current values for an uncirculated specimen range from $10 in MS60 to $65 in MS65.

Indian cents 1859-1864

This month the coin of the month is the copper nickel cents of 1859 to 1864. Replacing the short-lived flying eagle cent, this coin saw limited circulation at the time of its release due to the Civil War. In this coin's place was emergency currencies such as private tokens, encased stamps, and fractional currency. This probably accounts for the availability of the coins today, especially the 1862 and 1863 issues. Known as white cents or nickels this coin was replaced after 6 years with a thinner version struck in French bronze. The year after the alloy change the mint used nickel to strike three cent coins and then five cent coins.

James Longacre, who also designed the flying eagle cent, designed the Indian head cent. The coins name comes from the feather headdress worn not by an Indian but a representation of liberty. Popular mythology is the model was

Longacre's daughter Sarah. Walter Breen and others debunked this theory stating Longacre used similar images on other coin designs and in his notebook from many years earlier. Around the portrait is United States of America and the date. On the headband is Liberty and a ribbon with four diamonds.

Three key points to grading this coin are the feather tips. The diamonds and how many letters of Liberty are visible. There are two distinct reverses. The first reverse from 1859 has a laurel wreath circling the words one cent. The second reverse starting in 1860 and used until 1909 has an oak wreath with a small shield circling one cent. The coin is 19 mm and weighs 4.67 grams of 88% copper and 12% nickel. The basic 6-coin set is a good one for any collector to assemble. For those who want a more complete set there are two versions of the 1860 cent. The scarcer version has a pointed tip of the bust while the more common one has a rounded tip. Either way both coins are readily available. A complete set of 6 coins will cost about $140 in fine, $425 in Xf and $1600 in MS63. The seven-coin set will run about $180, $525, and $2400 respectively. Some double dies are known and there are a few 1864's with the designer initial struck on leftover planchets.

Swims Notes

This month's currency of the month is the fancy serial number note known as swims or rotator notes. These notes are a variation of the radar note. Instead of having the number read the same way forward and backward, swims notes can be read right side up or upside down. There are only five numbers that fit this criterion. The numbers are 0, 1, 6, 8 and 9. Number position is essential in swims notes. For each four-digit combination of the five possible numbers a mirror image of that number must occur for the effect to be complete. An exception is the 6/9 combination, sixes must become nines and vice versa. An example of a swims note is at the start of the article. Read the note and then turn the page 180 degrees and read the note again. In a run of 99,999,999 notes, only 624 can be swims notes compared to 9,999 radar/repeater notes. This means swims notes are 16 times rarer. Collecting these notes can be tricky. Due to their esoteric nature, there is not a price guide and are only worth what someone will pay for them. Looking on eBay, I found over 900 listings for radar notes but only 12 for swims notes. One-dollar notes in unc condition generally ran $125 to $150. Higher denomination notes and Graded notes sell for much more.

Interesting coins of the 1960's

This month's coins of the month are some well-known and some not so well-known coins of the 1960's. 1964 was a key year in numismatics. That year saw the debut of the Kennedy half and the last year of 90% silver coins. There were also a few other coins of note.

The first two are like UFO's and Bigfoot, there are rumors of their existence but there is no real physical evidence. One is the 1964- D Peace dollar. Records show there were over 316,000 struck but they were melted before they were officially released. Although the mint claims they were all melted, rumors persist that some managed to escape. The most likely way was mint workers swapping old silver dollars for the new ones. None have appeared in public due to the questionable legality of the coin ala the 1933 $20 gold coin.

Another questionable coin is the possible existence of a 1964 Franklin half. In Breen's book, he recounts a story of a N. Y. C. dealer who was offered one but did not want to buy without consulting Breen. He gives two possible scenarios on how a '64 Franklin could be struck. One is a clandestine issue like the 1913 Liberty nickel. The other is by mid-November, the mint could have produced

some ’64 dated dies for use that year and some test strikes could have been made to see how the dies worked. Those test strikes could have been taken from the mint.

The last set dated 1964 is however legal to own. In early 1965 the mint announced no proof sets and mint sets would be made. Instead, there would be “Special mint sets.” Those coins are not quite proof but much better than ordinary strikes. The dies were polished but the blanks went untreated. The coins were struck once but at more pressure than usual. The Mint used some leftover 1964 dies for each denomination to calibrate the presses for production of the ’65 special mint sets. Estimates range from 10 to 50 of each coin exists. For some reason, the mint did not object to these coins being sold and at a Heritage auction a complete set sold for $35,000. In 1966, the mint struck what is possibly the rarest Jefferson nickel. That year the mint was persuaded to add Felix Schlag’s initials to the obverse of the nickel. In a special striking, the mint made two full proof examples of the 1966 nickel. Both coins were presented to Schlag and are probably still in his estate. If one does enter the market, it could realize several hundred thousand. The last coin I will discuss is possibly the most available but is still extremely expensive. The 1969-S double die cent shows up in auctions every so often and sells for between $15,000 in Au to $75,000 in ms65.

Images of Elizabeth

This month the coins of the month are the several effigies of Queen Elizabeth II over the years. From 1953 to 2012 at least six different effigies appeared on the obverses of the coins of England, Canada, Australia, and other members of the British commonwealth.

The first effigy shows the 27-year-old Queen wearing a laurel wreath. In Canada two varieties were created centering on the folds of the dress she is wearing. In the mid 1960’s with the change in the Queens appearance, a new effigy was introduced. Canada’s came out in 1965, Australia in 1966 and England 1968. The portrait shows the Queen wearing a simple crown and a more detailed dress. An alternate effigy appeared in some of the smaller colonies. The image shows a more elaborate crown and a different hairstyle.

The third portrait era began in the early 1990’s shows the Queen in her mid-60’s wearing a different crown and necklace. I feel this is the least attractive of all the

effigies. Just after the turn of the century, two new images were introduced. In England and most commonwealth nations show the Queen in her mid-70's wearing a crown while in Canada she is not wearing a crown. Of the two, the Canadian version is more artistic. To commemorate her diamond jubilee, England created a new pair of effigies.

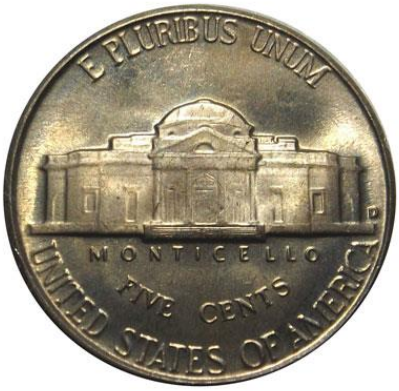
Collecting a type set of effigies is very easy. The set of six coins can be put together for just a few dollars depending on the country and denomination.

1950-D Jefferson nickel

This month the coin of the month is the 1950-D Jefferson nickel. This coin is a prime example of how coin prices can rise and fall. According to Breen, this issue was widely hoarded at the time of issue. A mintage of just 2.63 million, the lowest for the series probably was the main factor. Since so many coins were saved in mint state circulated coins are quite scarce. Back then, speculators must have had a lot of patience because it took over a decade for the coin to really appreciate. In the 1955 red book, the coin is listed at 5c. in uncirculated condition. By the early 1960's during the roll craze, the value shot up to $950 a roll with single coins in the $24-30 range. When the roll boom bust, prices fell

like a rock. In the mid 1980's a nice uncirculated coin could be bought for under $10.

A decade later with the advent of third-party grading services, prices began to rise. Another factor in the recent rise in price of this coin is whether the coin has fully struck steps on the reverse. Today the value of the coin ranges from $10 to $500 in ms60 to 67 with an average strike. With full steps the values are $12 to over $4,500 in the same grades. Those assembling the finest registry sets pay the highest values. When the coin had its first big price jump in the 1960's, some people tried to make a fast buck by altering other coins. One way was to add a mintmark to a 1950-P, another was to alter the date of another D mint coin most often the 1959. Sometimes they would take a 1950-P, slice it in half and glue it to a D mint coin from almost any other available year.



Columbian Half Dollar

This month the coins of the month are the Columbian half dollars of 1892-1893. Struck to raise funds for the Columbian exposition this is the first commemorative coin to depict an actual person. Held in Chicago, the exposition celebrated the 400th anniversary of Columbus' first voyage to the Americas. To strike and offer these coins along with a quarter featuring the image of Queen Isabella special legislation had to be passed by congress.

Once struck, the coins were offered for sale at $1 each. In a publicity stunt, the Remington Typewriter Co. paid $10,000 for the first coin struck. When the first coin struck it was found to be flawed so the second coin off the press was called the first strike. Other coins set aside were numbers 400, 1492 and 1892. At first sales were good but as soon as everyone who wanted one, had one, the sales fell off. This along with the economic crisis of 1893 left the show promoters with a large inventory of unsold coins. Out of a mintage of about 5 million, only

360,000 were sold at the exposition. Of the remaining coins, about 2 million were eventually released into circulation at face value. Seeing the coin in circulation as late as the 1950's was not unusual. The rest were melted at the mint.

The obverse features a fictional portrait of Columbus since no true image exists. Around the portrait is United States of America and Columbian Half Dollar separated by two stars. The design is based on a concept by Olin Warner and later modified by Charles Barber. The reverse shows Columbus' flagship, the Santa Maria. Below the ship are two earth hemispheres flanked by 1492. Around the edge are Worlds Columbian Exposition Chicago and the date 1892 or 1893. George Morgan designed the reverse. When first released the coin was heavily criticized. The portrait was compared to Daniel Webster, Henry Ward Beecher, and Sitting Bull. Of the reverse, some said it appears the ship is on wheels and the waves look like a herd of porpoises.

Collecting the Columbian half is affordable for any collector. In grades up to Au, the coin can be bought for under $20. Mint state coins range in price from $28 in ms60 to about $500 in MS 65. Between 100-200 proofs were struck for both years and are worth up to $25,000.

Two Cent Pieces

Born from the coin shortage of the Civil War the Two cent piece was one of the shortest-lived denominations in U.S. history. Struck for ten years from 1864 to 1873 the coin was popular when first released but fell out of favor once the war ended. The coin came into existence as part of the law that changed the composition of the cent form copper-nickel alloy to a bronze alloy. The two-cent piece is 23 mm in diameter and weighs 6.22 grams, exactly twice the weight of the cent. Designed by James Longacre this coin is the first to feature the motto "in god we trust."

The idea for adding a motto mentioning a supreme being was the idea of Rev. Mark R. Watkinson of Ridleyville, PA. The Reverend felt the inclusion of such motto would raise the spirits of the people depressed by the war. Rev. Watkinson did not actually coin the phrase “in god we trust” that phrase was derived from the motto of Brown University, which is “IN DEO SPERAMUS.” That translates into “in god we hope.” Variations of this motto were discussed including the motto “god our trust” before finally deciding on the motto as it appears today. The new motto became popular and was included in new coins as they were designed. By 1908, despite objections from President Roosevelt, the motto became mandatory on all silver and gold coins and in 1955 mandatory on all coins. The Indian head nickel holds the distinction of being the last coin not to have this motto.

The obverse design of the two-cent piece is like the shield nickel except for the motto placed on a ribbon above the shield in place of a cross. The motto tends to wear off quickly like the dates of the Indian nickel and standing liberty quarter. Also on the obverse is a pair of arrows and olive branches. The reverse of the coin has a large number 2 above the word cents surrounded by stalks of grain, either wheat or rice, surrounded by the words united states of America.

Collecting the two-cent piece is best suited to intermediate to advanced collectors. The complete set consists of 13 coins, 12 if you exclude the 1867 double die. There are four major varieties in the series. They are the 1864 large and small motto and the 1873 open and closed 3. The shape of the inside of the D in God determines the large and small mottos. The large motto has a tall inner portion while the small motto is more rounded. The open and closed 3 is easily determined. Grading this coin is tricky. The main grading area is the motto and how many words of the motto can be read. Secondary grading areas are the leaves and lines in the shield. Values for a 12-coin set are in MS60 $13,000, MS 63 $15,000 and MS65 $42,000. Proof coins generally fall in the $2,000 to $4,000 range with the 1873 varieties going for $3,500 to $6,000 and the 1864 small motto proof being the major rarity of the series at $75,000.

Canadian gold 1912-1914

This month's coins of the month are the Canadian gold coins of 1912-1914. When the Ottawa mint opened in 1908 plans were made to include gold coins as part of the regular production. It took several years to decide on designs and specifications of the coins. Originally, there were to be four denominations, $2.50, $5.00, $10.00, and $20.00 but only the middle two were struck. The series came to a sudden halt in 1914 with the start of WWI. At that time Canada enacted laws regulating the export and use of gold that weren't rescinded until the late 1920's. A few years after that rising gold prices and economic conditions made the everyday use of gold coins impractical.

A few months ago, the Canadian mint discovered about 250,000 of these coins in the vaults. They decided to offer some of the coins for sale to the public. A group of workers sorted through the pieces and pulled the nicest specimens. They were then separated into groups called hand selected and premium hand selected. When the job was completed, they had about 30,000 available for sale.

The marketing department then came up with several purchase options. One is a set of six coins, one from each year and denomination, premium hand selected for $12,000 (CDN). Single premium hand selected $5 coins are priced at $875, limit 1 and hand selected are $500, limit 3. Premium hand selected $10 are $1,750, limit 1 and hand selected are $1,000, limit 3. Physically the coins are remarkably like American coins of the same denomination. The $5 is 21.59 mm and weighs 8.36 grams of .900 fine gold. The $10 is 26.92 mm and weighs 16.72 grams of .900 fine gold. The designs of both denominations are the same. The obverse has a portrait of George V with the legend Georgivs V dei gra rex et ind imp. This translates to George 5, king by the grace of God and emperor of India. The reverse shows the Canadian coat of arms of the time surrounded by branched of maple leaves. Around that is Canada, the date and denomination. For more information on availability visit www.mint.ca.

Kennedy Half dollars 1965-70

This month's coins of the month are the silver clad Kennedy halves of 1965 to 1970. Born from a compromise in the coinage act of 1965, these are the last silver coins issued for circulation. Because of rising silver prices, mostly from increased demand of industry and photography, the bullion value of the coins exceeded the face value. To combat this, congress removed all silver from the dime and quarter and reduced the silver content of the half from 90% to 40%. Silver clad halves consist of an inner core of 21% silver and 79% copper between layers of 80% silver and 20% copper.

This gives the coins an outer appearance like that of previous silver coins. The actual silver weight dropped from .36 to .148 troy ounce. This alloy worked if silver remained under $3.37 an ounce. Of the six years the coin was issued the first five were for circulation, the last year, 1970 was a mint set only issue. The total mintage of these coins is over 850 million including proofs and SMS coins. Over the years millions of coins were melted for their silver value yet they can still be regularly found in rolls. For a short series, the coin has a nice variety of collecting options. Putting together a set is quite easy for beginners and challenging enough for advanced collectors. Usually collected in mint state, low mint state coins can be bought for a small premium over bullion value. An exception is the 1970-D that can cost between $15 and $75. For years it was the key date until the 1998-S matte appeared. Higher mint state coins are somewhat scarce and can cost between $75 and $1,500.

From 1965-67 the mint instead of striking proof coins, offered special mint set coins. These coins were struck with more care than regular uncirculated coins but not as much as proofs. Brilliant coins sell for a little more than normal strikes but very high-grade coins showing cameo contrast can sell for hundreds or thousands of dollars. Starting in 1968, proof production resumed in San Francisco. Like the SMS coins, average coins sell for $10 or less and exceptional deep cameo coins can sell for hundreds of dollars. The most interesting coin of the series is the 1966 SMS no FG variety. This coin is very scarce and can sell as much as $1,500.

1858 Flying Eagle Cent

This month's coin of the month is the 1858 Flying Eagle cent. This is the second of two years the coin was issued for circulation and is generally collected as part of the Indian cent series. The 1856 is a pattern and is an optional part of the series. By the 1850's, the large cent was falling out of favor and rising copper costs meant the mint was losing money striking those coins. After some experimentation of alloys including billon, a mix of silver and copper and designs with holes, the mint selected an alloy of 88% copper and 12% nickel. The size of the cent was reduced form 27.5 mm to 19 mm. The weight was reduced from 10.89 grams to 4.67 grams.

The task of designing the coin fell on James Longacre. For the obverse, he borrowed the eagle from the dollar coin designed by his mentor Christian Gobrecht. Around the eagle are United States of America and the date. The reverse has one cent surrounded by a wreath of agricultural products. During production, the mint discovered the alloy caused frequent die breaks and parts of the eagle failed to strike fully due to its opposition to the wreath. To try to correct this, the mint slightly altered the design. The result was the creation of the large and small letters variety. The way to tell them apart is the a and m of America are connected on the large letters and separate on the small. In 1858 about 24.6 million cents were struck. Although there were no exact mintages of each variety, it is believed there is about a 50-50 split. The small letter variety is worth only slightly more.

There is another variety of 1858 cents, the 1858/7 over date. This was created from leftover 1857 dies changed to 1858 to save money. This year's cent is popular with type set collectors and is affordable to almost any collector. Prices range from $25 in good, $50 in VF, $200 in about uncirculated, $1100 in MS 63

and $4,000 in MS 65. The over date in similar grades is $63, $390, $1400, $9000, and $55000.

Hungarian currency 1946

This month's currency of the month is the notes issued in Hungary during 1946. Right after WW2, the Hungarian economy was a mess. By early 1946 there was considerable inflation that really took off by summer. There was a great demand for higher and higher denomination notes. To facilitate the increases, numbers were not used and the values were spelled out. Another was they saved time and money was to reuse the same design on different denominations. The numbering system in Hungary is slightly different from what we are used to. In Hungary, 1,000 million is not a billion, but a milliard, and their billion is our trillion. This said, let us look at the notes.

First is the Egymillio Pengo or one million Pengo. The note features a portrait of Lajos Kossuth and the painting "Balaton Scene."

The Tizmillio or ten million Pengo also shows Kossuth but with a dove and olive branch. Szazmillio Pengo is 100 million and has a female portrait and an image of the Hungarian Parliament building.

The Egymillard Pengo is one billion and shows a different woman and the value in ornate letters on the reverse.

Tizezer milpengo is 10,000 million Pengo or 10 billion shows a female model and an ornate denomination on the reverse.

Szazezer milpengo can be written as 100,000,000,000 or 100 billion. It shows a woman on the front and the Hungarian coat of arms on the back.

Egymillio milpengo is one million million Pengo or one trillion. This note uses the same design as the one million-Pengo note.

Tizmillio milpengo is ten million-million or ten trillion and uses the same design as the ten million.

Szazmillio milpengo, 100 million-million or 100 trillion equals the highest denomination issued by Zimbabwe and has the same design as the 100 million Pengo.

Egymillard milpengo is the last of the milpengos and breaks the quadrillion barrier. From here on the denominations are increased to B-Pengo's. A B-Pengo is a billiopengo of one trillion. There were five B-Pengo notes issued and another printed but not issued. The notes start at Tizezer B-Pengo or 10 quadrillion thru Szazmillio B-Pengo or100 quintillion. That is a 1 followed by 20 zeros.

There was an Egymillard B-Pengo printed but not issued. By the end of July 1946, Hungary decided enough was enough and replaced the Pengo with the Forint. The exchange rate was 400 octillion Pengo per forint. An octillion is 1 followed by 27 zeros. A US dollar was worth about 11.7 forint.

Walton 1913 Liberty head nickel

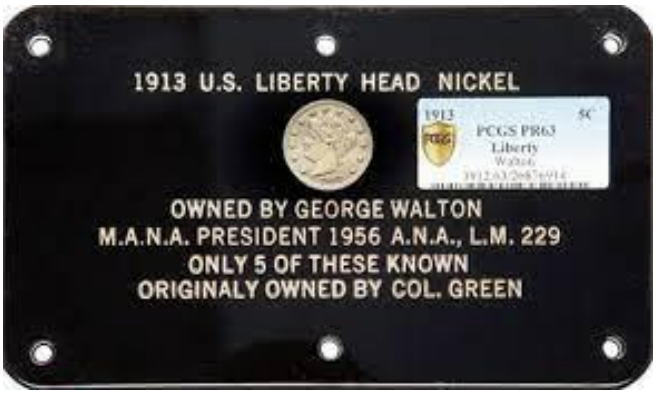
This month's coin of the month is the Walton specimen of the 1913 Liberty head nickel. In 1962 George Walton lost his life in an auto accident in North Carolina. The next year his family sent his coin collection to Stack's in New York to be sold at auction. Back then the art of coin authenticating was not a sophisticated as it is today. Both Stacks and the American Numismatic society misidentified the coin as an altered date and returned the coin to the Walton family. There the coin sat in a box in a closet for 40 years. Stories soon sprouted up that the coin was lost at the crash site and some even speculated there were only four specimens to begin with.

A few months before the 2003 ANA convention in Baltimore, one of the privately owned specimens was scheduled to go up for auction. Heritage auctions, along with Coin World came up with a plan to reunite the four known specimens for the first time since the 1940's. Donn Pearlman was able to easily locate the presence of two specimens, one in a private collection and the other from the ANA museum. The specimen from the Smithsonian was harder to obtain. Beth Deisher, Editor of Coin World, managed to cut through the red tape and the coin was brought to the convention under heavy guard. Pearlman and Heritage then issued a press release offering one million dollars for the discovery of the missing fifth specimen. Heritage then upped the ante by offering an additional ten-thousand-dollar bonus if they were the first to see the coin. Similar bounties were offered before, and Heritage only placed this one betting they would not have to pay up.

In a case of be careful what you wish for, you may just get it, someone contacted the Walton family and asked them to bring their coin to Baltimore. The day before the convention Mark Brokard, John Danreuther and Jeff Garrett along with a few others examined the coin in a small side room. Since 1962 the other specimens of the 1913 nickel were closely examined and all die characteristics were noted. It only took a glance of the Walton nickel by the experts to determine the coin was genuine. One of the ways they knew it was real was by what they called the fabric of the coin which is unique to 1913 nickels. Once they compared the Walton coin with the other four coins, they knew for certain it was real. Heritage, true to their word paid the Walton family the finder's fee but the family didn't want to sell the coin. When the convention opened all five coins were displayed together for the first time in over 50 years.

For the next ten years the coin traveled across the country appearing at various conventions. PCGS gave the coin a grade of proof 63. Even Heritage thinks the coin is over graded and should be proof 61. In 2013, the Walton family finally decided to sell the coin and Heritage was chosen to sell the coin at the Central States convention. The Chicago Coin Club arranged a reunion of its own. At the convention, they assembled a panel of Pearlman, Deisher, Brokard and several members of the Walton family each relating stories on how the coin was rediscovered. During the presentation, the coin was brought in the room and everyone in attendance had a chance to examine it up close. I was one of those in the audience and holding that coin was a thrill.

Later that night, just before 8 p.m. the coin came up for auction. The opening bid was $2.2 million, and raises were $100,000 a pop. After a couple of minutes, the final hammer price was $2.7 million. The buyers fee raised the selling price to $3.17 million. The buyers were Jeff Garrett and Larry Lee who plan to keep it in their personal collection but would sell the coin if the price is right.



1982 George Washington Half

This month’s coin of the month is the 1982 George Washington half-dollar. This coin is the first of the modern commemorative series. In the mid 1950’s, the mint suspended the striking of commemoratives due in part to low sales and political abuses. From then to the early 1980’s many coin proposals were rejected including coins for the bicentennial causing those to be struck for circulation instead of for collectors. In 1981, Public law 97-104 was passed calling for the first commemorative half in 28 years. The subject was the 250th anniversary of Washington’s birth. The bill called for the striking of no more than 10 million coins the same size and alloy as pre-1965 halves. The specifications are 1.2-inch diameter, weighing 12.5 grams of 90% silver and 10% copper.

Elizabeth Jones designed both the obverse and reverse with help from Michael Peloso. The obverse shows Washington on horseback looking slightly down and to his right. The image of Washington is a composite of two sources. The head is from a Gilbert Stuart painting and the body was derived from an image by John Trumbull. The inscriptions are George Washington, Liberty and 250th anniversary of birth, 1982. The mintmark, D (Denver) or S (San Francisco) appears to the right of the horse's neck.

The reverse shows a ¾ view of Mt. Vernon. The inscriptions are United States of America, in God we trust and Half Dollar. In the lawn below the house is an eagle like the US seal with a ribbon reading E Pluribus Unum. The coins were sold by the mint with a pre-order and regular price. The pre-order price was $8.50 for the mint state coin and $10 for the proof. The regular price rose to $10.50 and $12.50. They were sold thru 1983 and many thousand unsold coins were melted. The final mintages are 2,210,458 in mint state and 4,894,044 in proof.

Although they were packaged and sold to collectors, some found their way into circulation. Some roll searchers have reported finding them in rolls. Collecting the coin is quite easy and nice unc's and proofs only sell for a small premium over melt value. At $20 silver the melt value is $7.20 so the coins can be found in the $10-12 range with little trouble.

Canadian Tombac Nickels

This month's coins of the month the Canadian Tombac nickels of 1942-1943. During WWII, the Canadian Military needed vast amounts of nickel for the war effort. Just like the U.S., the solution they came up with was to temporary altering the alloy of the 5-cent piece. Instead of using silver, the Canadian mint

chose to use an alloy of bronze called Tombac. The word Tombac is of Indonesian origin and consists of .88 copper and .12 zinc. To help the public to distinguish this coin from a cent when it became tarnished was to make it 12 sided.

In 1942, Canada issued two types of nickels. The first was the standard pure nickel issue and the Tombac came out later. The designs for both are identical with the obverse design by T. E. Paget and reverse by G. E. Kruger-Gray. The obverse shows a portrait of King George VI. Around the portrait is a Latin phrase that translates to George 6, King by the grace of God and Emperor of India. The reverse shows a beaver on a log. Above are 5 cents flanked by two maple leafs, below is Canada and the date.

Thomas Shingles designed a different design used in 1943. The design has a large torch over a V used to represent both 5 and victory. Above the torch is Canada and below is cents flanked by two maple leafs. The date is split and appears to both the left and right. One interesting design element is instead of denticles there are the dots and dashes of international Morse code. The phrase shown is we win when we work willingly.

Collecting the issue is easy as both coins have mintages in the millions. Prices for either coin range from 50 cents to $15 in grades VG to MS 63. Canadian mint records show in 1944 there were 8,000 tombac nickels struck of which only 1 is known to exist. In 2005, the Canadian mint struck a silver version of the 1943 issue for the 60th anniversary of the end of the war.

2008 Gold Buffalo Fractional

This month’s coins of the month are the 2008 American Buffalo fractional gold coins. For over 25 years the mint has used classic coin designs from the early

20th century for precious metal bullion coins. First were the silver coins featuring the obverse design of the walking liberty half and gold coins using the obverse of the St. Gaudens $20. In 2006 the mint added James Fraser's Indian Head-Buffalo reverse to the bullion family. For the first two years, only full ounces were made. In 2008 the mint experimented with fractional ounces for this series. The fractions are 1/10 ounce, ¼ ounce and ½ ounce with denominations of $5, $10 and $25. The reverse was changed slightly from the nickel to make it more like other modern bullion coins.

As a one-year issue, the coins have gained a collector value over the actual bullion value. Struck in both Proof and burnished Mint State, mintages range from 9,949 for the $10 in mint state to 18,884 for the $5 in Proof. Since these are gold coins, collecting these requires a healthy bank account. Current values are $600 and $660 for the $5 in Mint state and Proof. The $10 values are $1,375 and $1,550 and the $25 goes for $1,350 and $1,850. Certified Mint state and Proof 70 coins can sell for even higher prices. All American Buffalo fractional coins were struck at the West Point mint.

1936 Gettysburg Half

This month's coin of the month is the 1936 Battle of Gettysburg half dollar. Like the Delaware and the Elgin halves, the mint took liberties with the coins date. The law authorizing the coin was signed in 1936, hence the coins date. The coin was struck in 1937 for an event to be held in 1938. The event in question was the 75th anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg. At that event hundreds of surviving civil war veterans, both union and confederate, met to share war

stories. The featured speaker was President Roosevelt, who dedicated the Eternal Light Peace Memorial.

Pennsylvanian artist Frank Vittor designed the coin. The obverse shows a union and confederate soldier looking almost like brothers. The legends around the portraits are United States of America, Blue and Grey reunion, Liberty and E Pluribus Unum.

The reverse shows shields representing both sides separated by a double headed faces flanked by oak and olive branches. The reverse legends are 75th anniversary, 1863, 1938, Battle of Gettysburg, in God we trust, 1936 and Half dollar.

The original plan was for the coin to be struck at three mints. The split would have been 20,000 from Philadelphia and 15,000 from both Denver and San Francisco. When this plan fell through, all coins were struck in Philadelphia. This caused a problem for the promoters. They were selling the coin for $1.65 and had to either give three Philadelphia coins or give refunds for unwanted coins. In the end out of a mintage of 50,000, 23,100 ended up being melted leaving a net mintage of 26,900.

Compared to other classic commemoratives with similar mintages, the Gettysburg is a bit pricey. Values range from $435 in about uncirculated to $925 in MS 65.

1963 Franklin Half

This month's coin of the month is the 1963 Franklin Half Dollar. Began as a pet project of Mint director Eva Adams, this coin was issued only 16 years before the death of President Kennedy caused its demise. Two factors the half was discontinued was Jackie Kennedy's wishes and the fact Franklin was not a president.

When John Sinnock designed the coin, he used a bust by Houdon for the obverse and his design for the sesquicentennial half for the reverse. The obverse has the Franklin portrait circled by liberty, in God we trust and the date. The reverse is dominated by the liberty bell. Around the bell is United states of America, e pluribus unum and half dollar. To the right of the bell is a tiny eagle. This was done to comply with the tradition of placing an eagle on all coins 25 cents and up. The eagle on this coin looks more like a man wearing an eagle costume than a real bird. Well-struck coins exhibit strong bell lines at the base of the bell and on well struck coins the words pass and stow can be read.

The mintmark appears on the reverse between two notches on the top of the bell directly below the e in states. The 1963 issue is a quite common coin. The Philadelphia mint struck 22 million coins and Denver struck 67 million. There were also three million proof coins struck. Physically the coin is a standard silver half. The coin weighs 11.5 grams, 30.6 mm in diameter and has an actual silver content of .36169 troy ounces.

Circulated coins trade for just over silver value. High grade uncirculated coins sell for much more and those with full bell lines sell for the most. Both P and D business strikes in MS66 sell for about $500. Philadelphia coins with full bell lines are scarce and a MS66 FBL can sell for over $2,700. Brilliant proofs are common and sell for about $20 but pristine deep cameo proofs graded PR69 can fetch up to $5,500.

1937-D 3-Leg Buffalo

This month's coin of the month is the 1937-D 3- Leg buffalo nickel. Since the coins release over 75 years ago, it has become recognized as an optional yet highly desired part of a buffalo nickel set. According to Walter Breen, a new mint employee named Mr. Young is responsible for creating this variety. During a production run, the planchet feeder jammed and the dies clashed together leaving traces of one image on the other die. Rather than changing the dies, Mr. Young smoothed out the clash marks and in doing so removed part of the buffalo's right front leg.

By the time the error was discovered, several thousand (?) strikes were mixed in with normal strikes. The mint decided not to pick out the errors and placed the coins into normal circulation. Soon it became one of the most popular varieties in the series. One result of its popularity is it became one of the most faked coins of the 20th century. Most fakes are done by removing part of the front leg. Fortunately, several diagnostics identify a genuine coin from a fake.

On the real variety the P of Pluribus and the U of Unum are clearly separate from the buffalo's back, on normal strikes both of those letters touch the back. Other diagnostics include a weakly struck rear leg and a series of raised dots below the animal's belly. With so many forgeries available, it is a good idea to have the coin authenticated. Values for the coin according to the PCGS price guide range from $500 in good to $2,400 in MS60 all the way to $67,500 in MS66. Population reports for MS66 and up from PCGS and NGC add up to 26 coins. Some of these coins may be re-submissions seeking a higher grade so a more realistic figure may be 15-20 pieces. You can have your business card displayed in this newsletter for only $10 per year.

1974 Aluminum Cent

This month's coin of the month is the 1974 aluminum Lincoln cent pattern. In 1974, like 1964, rising metal prices prompted the mint to consider a change in a coin's alloy. In this case, the price of copper began to rise to a point where the "bullion" value of the coin is more than face value. With copper, that value is $1.54 per pound. One of the possible alloys the mint considered was near pure aluminum.

In late 1973, the mint struck a little over 1.5 million aluminum cents using 1974 dated dies. The new weight of the coin was .93 gram compared to 3.11 grams for copper cents. The mint then sent about three dozen coins to congress to try and persuade the politicians to approve the change. This effort failed due in part to objections from copper mines and the vending machine industry.

This brings up the story of Albert Toven. He was working as a Capitol police guard when he noticed a congressman drop something. He picked up the item and tried to return it but was told to keep it. It was an aluminum cent. He kept the coin for over 25 years and in 2005, ICG certified the coin grading it AU58. A few years later, PCGS upgraded the coin to MS62. There are other examples, as many as a dozen, not returned to the mint. These coins are rarely seen because the owners believe they may be subject to seizure like the 1933 $20 gold. The Philadelphia mint is not the only place that struck 1974 aluminum cents. The Denver mint also struck about 60 pieces. The mint director kept one and this year the coin was certified by PCGS as a MS63. It will go on sale at the CSNS convention in April. The mint also struck a few pieces dated 1975.

2014 Maundy Coins

This month's coins of the month are the 2014 British Maundy coins. British tradition holds that on Maundy Thursday, the day before Good Friday, the current monarch will bestow a gift of money to select recipients. The tradition began in the 13th century with gifts of food and clothing changing to gifts of money in the 17th century. Each year the ceremony mover from one location to another with no one location selected more than once every 10 years.

This year's ceremony was held at Blackburn Cathedral in Lancashire. At the ceremony, Queen Elizabeth handed out two pouches to 88 men and 88 women. One pouch contained a 5-pound coin commemorating the 300th anniversary of Queen Anne and a 50 pence coin commemorating the 20th Commonwealth games. The other pouch contained 88 pence worth of Maundy coins. Why 88? The number comes from the Queen's current age. Next year, if the Queen is still alive, there will be 89 men and 89 women each receiving 89 pence.

Maundy coins come in denominations of 1, 2, 3 and 4 pence. All are struck in Sterling (92.5%) silver. Each coin is very small with the 1 penny weighing .47 gram, 2 pence .94 gram, 3 pence 1.41 gram and 4 pence 1.89 gram. The obverse features the original portrait of Queen Elizabeth first used in 1953.The reverse shows the denomination under a crown circled by a wreath.

Collecting Maundy money is not exceedingly difficult. For the last 200 years or so, mintages of Maundy sets range from 1000 to 2000 sets. The easiest sets to obtain are those of Victoria and Edward VII. Some of these sets can be bought for $125 or less. The more recent sets are more expensive. Sets form the last 30-40 years bring $300 or more.

1861-C Half Eagle

This month's coin of the month is the 1861-C Half Eagle. During the early 1830's, transporting gold from the gold rush region of North Carolina to the mint in Philadelphia was dangerous work. The local residents sent a request to Washington to establish a mint or at least an assay office. Eventually the government relented and established a mint in Charlotte and in 1838 began striking gold coins.

From the start, this mint along with the one in Dahlonega, GA, received little support from the Philadelphia mint. The presses were sub-standard, and the dies were of less quality than those used in Philadelphia. On April 20, 1861, Confederate forces seized the mint and forced the employees to swear allegiance to the South. Those who refused were fired. After the Confederates took control of the mint, they sent 12 previously struck coins to Philadelphia for assay. The coins were determined to be of good weight and fineness.

When the South took over, the mint had struck 5,992 $5 Gold Pieces of Half Eagles. Under the Confederacy, production continued for another month, striking another 887 pieces. This brought the total mintage to 6,897 coins, an exceedingly small mintage even for this mint. The same year, the Philadelphia mint struck 100 times the number of coins of Charlotte. It is said one way to identify coins struck by the South is a die crack through the top of the letters in AMREI. Other than that, the coin is a typical Half Eagle of the period.

The coin weighs 8.24 grams of 90% gold and 10% copper and silver with a diameter of 17/20" or 21.65 mm. Christian Gobrecht designed the coin whose obverse shows a portrait of Liberty done in the Roman style with the word liberty on the headdress. Circling the portrait is 13 stars and the date. The reverse features an eagle with a shield on its breast and holding an olive branch and three arrows in its claws. Circling this device is United States of America and 5 Dol. The mintmark "C" is directly below the eagle.

Collecting this coin requires some deep pockets. The coin is rare circulated and extremely rare in mint state. Values are $1500 in fine, $2250 in VF, $4850 in extra fine and $23000 in mint state 60.

1885-CC Silver Dollar

This month's coin of the month is the 1885-CC Morgan Dollar. In 1870, the government opened a mint in Carson City, Nevada to strike gold and silver coins locally. By 1879, the only silver coins struck in Carson City were dollar coins. From 1879 to 1884 silver dollar coin mintages ranged from just under 600,000 to just over 2.2 million.

In 1885, only 228,000 dollars were struck. This is the fourth lowest mintage behind the 1895-P, 1894-P, and 1893-S. Although the mint struck 12,000 1895-P dollars, none are known to exist and only proofs are available.

In the early 1970's, the Government Services Administration conducted a series of sales of dollar coins found in vaults in the 1960's. The coins were put in special holders and offered to the public in a kind of auction where different years had different opening bids. In the sale was 148,000 1885-CC dollars, which represented about 65% of the coin's total mintage. In the first sales, the minimum bid was $60. According to the 1972 Red Book the value of an 1885-CC Morgan dollar was $65.In the last sales in the early 1980's, the minimum bid was raised to $180.

After the sales ended, dealers began cracking out the coins in large numbers. One reason was to save space, and another was the advent of third-party grading. If a coin received a high grade, it was easier to sell in the slab. Recently some third-party graders graded the coin in a GSA holder and seal it with tamper resistant tape.

This is one of those coins, along with the 1950-D nickel and the 1964 Kennedy half that is easier to find uncirculated than circulated. The values for the 1885-

CC dollar range from $400 in good to over $1200 in MS65. The GSA holder only adds about 5-10% to the coins value.

$100,000 Gold Certificate

This month's coin of the month is the 1934 $100,000 Gold Certificate. This is the highest denomination note issued by the treasury and was used to transfer funds between banks. This practice continued until the mid-1960's when wire transfers made the note unnecessary. The note was never issued to the public and is considered illegal to own. Although it would be funny to walk into a 7-11, buy a big gulp and some beef jerky, hand the bill to the cashier and say, "Do you have change for $100,000"?

Between December 18, 1934, and January 9, 1935, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing only made 42,000 of these notes that feature a portrait of Woodrow Wilson. The signatures on the note are those of W. A. Julian and Henry Morgenthau jr. Even though the U.S. was going off the gold standard, the note says it is redeemable for gold on demand. Both the Treasury seal and serial number are printed in gold and the total value of the printed notes is 4.2 billion. The reverse of the note is very plain. Instead of using green ink, the treasury used orange ink. The number 100,000 appears five times. Once in each corner and once in the middle over a dollar sign. The words United States of America and One Hundred Thousand Dollars also appear. The border consists of fancy scrollwork.

After the bill's usefulness ended, the Treasury destroyed most of the specimens, keeping some for display in various museums. There are about seven still in existence also an uncut sheet of 12 notes the Treasury regularly puts on exhibit.

Those who collect fancy serial numbers may find this interesting. Of the 42,000 notes printed, there are only three radar notes. There are also only four repeater notes, 40 seven of a kind (zero) and only 1 stepladder note (00012345). No Star notes were printed.

1997 Jackie Robinson

This month's coins of the month are the 1997 Jackie Robinson commemoratives. Now known as the inspiration for this year's Little League World Series United States Champs, these coins were issued to mark the 50th anniversary of Robinson joining the major leagues. The two-coin set consists of a silver dollar and gold half eagle.

Alfred Maletsky and T. James Farrell designed the silver dollar that shows Robinson sliding into a base. Around the image is liberty, in God we trust and the date. The reverse shows the Robinson 50th anniversary logo, United States of America, e pluribus unum, one dollar and facts about Robinson. The San Francisco mint struck the coin in both proof and mint state. William Cousins and James Peed designed the gold coin showing a close portrait of Robinson circled by his name, liberty, in God we trust and the date. The reverse has a

baseball with the inscription 1919-1972 legacy of courage. Circling the ball is United States of America, e pluribus unum and five dollars.

The West Point mint struck this coin in both proof and mint state. The coins did not sell well when released in 1997. The best seller was the proof dollar at 110,002 pieces. The mint state dollar sold 30,180. The proof gold mintage is 24,072 and the mint state gold mintage is only 5,174. Values for the silver coins are $90 in proof and $72 in mint state. The gold coins are worth $590 in proof and $2,900 in mint state. There is a special legacy set that includes a baseball card and pin along with the proof silver and gold. The set is worth $650.

1893 Columbian Exposition elongated cents

This month's coins of the month are the elongated cents created at the Columbian Exposition of 1892-1893. Organized to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Columbus' first voyage to the New World, the exposition saw the debut of many new products. Among those were the Ferris wheel, Juicy Fruit gum, Pabst Blue Ribbon beer, Commemorative coins, and elongated souvenir coins.

There were four main designs of elongates with many minor varieties. The designs consist of mainly text with an occasional star. Type 1 says Columbian/1893/Exposition. Type 2 is the same as type 1 except there are stars to the right and left of 1893. Type 3 says Columbian/Exposition/1893 with a few scattered stars and type 4 has an EC monogram flanked by 19 and 93. Elongated cents are made by squeezing a coin between two rollers of which one has an engraved design. The gearing of the rollers can produce a force between 20-22 tons. The most common medium for rolling elongates is the Indian cent.

Although at the exposition, they would roll anything that was small, round, and metallic. There are examples of many different types of coins used from large

cents to gold coins. Foreign visitors would have the coins of their country rolled as a souvenir. This tradition continues today at most major coin shows, usually by Ray Dillard and TEC. Prices for these elongates vary greatly, most cents can be bought for $100-$200 depending on condition. Some of the more esoteric varieties especially the gold ones can sell for several hundred to several thousand dollars.

Maui Trade Dollars

This month's coins of the month are Maui Trade Dollars. Starting in 1992, The Maui Chamber of Commerce has issued these tokens as souvenirs and a source of income to fund various local projects. The tokens are sold at face value and can be spent at local participating merchants only during the year the token was issued. To enhance collectability, each year the obverse design is changed showing different fish, plants, animals, and other aspects of life on Maui. The two things constant on each issue's obverse are the Date and Maui NO KA OI. This translates to Maui, The Best.

The common reverse has an ornate number and word one in the center. Below the denomination is a disclaimer good for one dollar in trade at participating merchants during (year). Around the edge is One Maui Trade Dollar, some stars, and The Valley Isle. Physically the coin weighs 25.57 grams, 39.2 mm diameter and has a reeded edge. Mintages vary year to year from a low of about 50,000 to a high of about 200,000. The previous description is for coins struck 2002-2007.

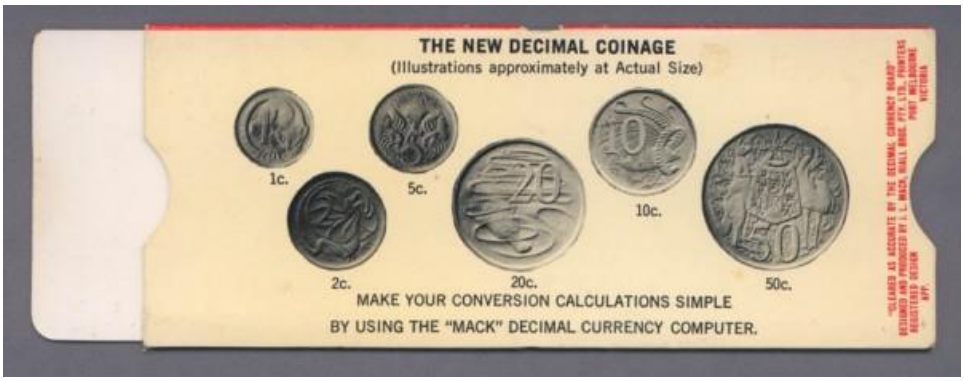
Starting in 2008 the face value was raised to two dollars. All other specifications remain the same. Despite the fact the coins can be spent, it is unlikely they were used in that capacity. Today many collectors attempt to assemble a date set of the coins. On eBay many single coins sell between $2 and $10 depending on year. Some sellers offer packaged sets of 5 coins for $10 -$20. Assembling a set may take some time, but with a bit of patience can be done for around $100. For advanced collectors there are one ounce silver- and gold-plated versions.

Australian Decimal Coins

This month's coins of the month are Australian decimal coins issued starting 1966. Prior to 1966, Australia used the same coinage system as Great Brittan. In that system the main currency unit was the Pound. The Pound consisted of 12 pennies to a shilling, two shillings to a florin, five shillings to a crown and four crowns to a Pound. Denominations issued were half penny, penny, three pence, six pence, shilling, florin, crown, sovereign, two Pounds and five pounds.

In 1966, Australia adopted the decimal system of 100 cents to a Dollar. Each of the new denominations featured a different animal on the reverse. All coins have a common obverse, featuring a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II. Stuart Devlin designed each of the new reverses. Along with the animal, the denomination is shown only with a number. The new one-cent coin shows a Feather Tailed Glider. The two-cent coin depicts a Frill Necked Lizard. The five-cent coin has an Echidna. The ten-cent coin shows a Lyre Bird. The twenty-cent coin shows a Duckbill Platypus, and the fifty-cent coin has the coat of arms flanked by a Kangaroo and Emu.

In 1966 the fifty-cent coin was the only one struck in silver and is round. Starting in 1967 the alloy was changed to copper-nickel and the shape changed to 12-sided. Collecting Australian decimal coins is well within anyone's budget. Most early dates are available for $20 or less although there are a few higher priced 20-cent pieces from the mid 1960's. A common mint set from the 1970's and 1980's can be had for $25 or less.



1915 Panama Pacific $2.50

This month's coin of the month is the Pan-Pac $2.50 commemorative. From Feb. 20 to Dec. 4, 1915, San Francisco hosted the Panama Pacific Exposition to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal and the rebuilding of San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake. Like the Columbian exposition, the Panama Pacific exposition offered many souvenirs including commemorative coins. One of the coins offered was this $2.50 gold piece.

Charles Barber designed the obverse and George Morgan handled the reverse. The obverse shows Columbia riding a Hippocampus while holding a Caduceus. Columbia differs from Liberty in that Columbia represents the United States in human form. Since the end of WWI, Uncle Sam portrayed that role. The Hippocampus is a mythological creature with the head and front of a horse and the tail of a fish. The use here is to depict the use of the Panama Canal as a conduit of commerce. The Caduceus in Columbia's hand represents the triumph of medicine over Malaria and Yellow Fever in the Canal Zone. Around the central design is Panama Pacific Exposition, the date and S mintmark. The reverse shows an eagle perched on a Roman standard inscribed with E Pluribus Unum in incuse letters. Circling this device is United States of America and 2 ½ Dol.

Physically the coin is a standard quarter eagle, 18mm, 4.18 grams of 90% gold and 10% copper. Total mintage is 10,000 but 3,251 went unsold and were melted. This leaves a net mintage of 6,749. At the exposition, the coin sold for $4.00. Today the coin will cost form $1500 for an XF/AU all the way up to $15,000 for a MS67.

1935-A $1 Hawaii Overprint

This month's currency of the month is the 1935-A silver certificate with the Hawaii overprint. Soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the threat of a Japanese invasion was a distinct possibility. In response to the threat, a plan was devised to make the U.S. currency in Hawaii worthless should it fall into enemy hands. On January 10, 1942, military Governor Delos Emmons ordered a recall of American currency to be replaced with notes overprinted with Hawaii on both sides.

The overprint appears twice on the obverse and in large outline letters across the reverse. Both the Treasury seal and serial numbers were printed in brown ink to further distinguish these notes from regular silver certificates. In the interim between the recall and the issue of new notes, individuals were limited to $200 in cash and businesses $500 with some special exceptions. By July 15, 1942, the only currency allowed in Hawaii was overprint notes. The next problem was what to do with the recalled currency. Rather than ship the notes to the mainland, an order was issued for all $200 million in notes burned. At first crematoriums were used and later large ovens at pineapple plantations.

By October 1944, the threat of invasion passed, and the last overprint notes were issued. The notes continued to circulate till April 1946 when a recall order was issued. Soldiers and civilians saved the notes as souvenirs. About 35 million $1 notes were printed in addition to about 204,000-star notes. Hawaii overprint notes were issued in denominations of $5, $10, and $20. Current values of the $1 note range from $32 in VG to $200 in uncirculated. Star notes are much rarer and are worth between $175 and $2,500 in the same grades.

1974-1980 French 50 Francs

This month's coin of the month is the French 50-franc coins struck from 1974-1980. This coin succeeded the similarly sized10 franc coin from the previous ten years. Both the rising price of silver and decline of the franc made the increase in face value necessary. Through the late 1970's the average exchange rate of the French franc was about 4.5 to the dollar. This means a 50-franc coin had a value of about $11 US. Because the coin was large and had a silver content, it probably did not circulate much. Also circulating at the time were 10- and 50-franc notes.

Augustin Dupree first created the design for the coin in 1795. The obverse shows Hercules flanked by allegorical figures representing Liberty and Justice. Liberty is shown holding a pole topped with a Phrygian or Liberty cap like some US coins from the 1790's through the 1890's. Justice is identified by the scales she is holding. Hercules in the middle is wearing a Neman lion skin from the 12 tasks that according to legend bestowed immortality. Circling the figures is Liberte Egalite Fraternite (Liberty, Equality and Brotherhood) and Dupree.

The reverse shows 50 Francs surrounded by a wreath of oak and olive. Around the wreath is Republique Francaise. The edge is neither plain nor reeded but has symbols representing agriculture, industry, and commerce. As mentioned earlier, this is a large silver coin. The size is 41 mm and weighs 30 grams of 90% silver and 10% copper. The actual silver weight is .87 troy ounce. Compared to a standard US silver dollar this coin is about 12% larger. Collecting this coin is not difficult. Most years the mintages range from 4 to 11 million. The only key date is the 1980, which was only issued in mint sets and has a mintage of 60,000. Values for the common pieces are $33 in MS63 and the 1980 is worth $80.

Canadian Large Cents 1902-10

This month's coin of the month is Canadian large cent issued 1902 to 1910.The short length of the series coincides with the brief reign of Edward VII who became King in 1901 following the death of Queen Victoria. As usual, the coins for Edward were not struck till the next calendar year.

During the first six years, the coins were struck in London without a mintmark and in 1907 some coins were struck in Birmingham, England with an H mintmark. George W. DeSaulles designed and engraved both the obverse and reverse of the coin. The obverse shows a crowned portrait of Edward. Around the image is a circle of dots and the words EDWARDVS VII DEI GRATIA REX IMPERATOR and CANADA. That translates to Edward VII by the grace of God King and Emperor.

The reverse design has ONE CENT and the date in the center also circled by dots and a vine of 16 maple leaves. The mintmark appears just inside the circle of dots below the date. Physically the coin is 25.4 mm, weighs 5.67 grams of 95% copper, 4% tin and 1% zinc. The edge of the coin is plain. Assembling a complete set is not a hard task. In VF almost all coins are $10 or less. In extra fine the price rises to $20 or less and most mint state coins are $50 or less. The exception is the key date 1907-H. While most coins have a mintage of 2-5

million the ’07-H has a mintage of just 800,000. Values for this coin range from $30 in VF to $200 in MS60.

1779 Rhode Island Ship Token

This month’s coin of the month is the Rhode Island ship token of 1779. While this coin is listed in the Red Book, it is not an American issue but was struck in England and only circulated here when brought over by immigrants. After years of speculation, the current theory is this coin is a propaganda issue intended for use in the Netherlands. The subject of the coin is the victory of Admiral Howe over Major General John Sullivan and French Admiral Comte d’Estaing prompting the American and French to flee Rhode Island. The British then issued this coin to persuade the Dutch to side with the British against the Americans. This also explains why the inscriptions are in Dutch.

The obverse shows the flagship commanded by Admiral Howe. Around the ship is Der Admiraals flag von Admiral Howe, 1779 and on some specimens a small wreath. The reverse shows an unusually shaped land mass with soldiers walking right. To the left of the island are three ships. To the right are thirteen small boats. Around this image is D vlugtende Amiricaane van Rhode Yland augt 1778 and a floral design. This inscription roughly translates to the Americans fleeing from Rhode Island August 1778.

The coin measures 32.4 mm and is struck in brass although some are known in pewter. Collecting this coin is not for beginners. Prices for the coin range from $2,000 in AU to $15,000 in mint state. Prices for pewter examples range from $11,000 to $39,000 in the same grades. As a side note, this coin was used as a minor plot point on the Fox TV show Family Guy where the coin was found under a carpet.

1963 $5 United States Note

This month's currency of the month is the 1963 $5 United States Note. On June 4, 1963, President Kennedy signed executive order 11110 authorizing the issue of these notes. Also known as legal tender notes, these are the last $5 notes issued directly by the government not through the Federal Reserve System. The main difference between United States notes and federal Reserve notes is the serial number and treasury seal are printed in red. Starting in 1963 the Bureau of Engraving and printing in Washington D.C. printed over 63 million $5 notes ending the print run in 1967. By 1969 the last of the red seal $5 notes were issued.

The design of the bill is typical of the notes of the time. In the center is a portrait of President Lincoln. Above is United States Note and United States of America. Below is Lincoln and Five Dollars. To the left over a 5 is this note is legal tender for all debts public and private, the serial number and the signature of Treasurer, Kathryn O'hay Granahan. To the right is the same serial number, the Treasury seal over five, series 1963 and the signature of the Secretary of the Treasury C. Douglas Dillon. In each corner is a 5. The reverse shows the Lincoln memorial Above is United States of America and in God we trust. Below is Lincoln Memorial and Five Dollars. In the corners are various fives.

Since the note is still considered quite common, obtaining one for your collection is an easy task. On occasion, they can still be found in circulation. Current retail prices range from $6 in circulated condition to $15 in uncirculated. Star notes are a little rarer with about 4 million printed. These notes sell for between $10 and $25.

British 20 Pence

This month's coin of the month is the British 20 Pence. First issued in 1982, this coin was used to bridge the gap between the 10 and 50 pence. This coin is unusual in that it is a seven-sided coin like the 50 pence. It is also unusual due to its mix of raised and incuse lettering. The coin is 21.1 mm and weighs 5.1 grams. I have fond a few in rolls of nickels. The obverse features a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II. Around the portrait is a wide rim with incuse writing that reads Elizabeth II, D, G. Reg. F. D. This translates to Elizabeth the second by the grace of God Queen and defender of the faith.

Over the years the portrait was updated as the Queen ages. The Reverse from 1982 to 2007 shows a crowned English rose in the center. Around this device is another wide rim like the obverse. Flanking the rose is the date. Written incuse in the rim is twenty pence and 20. Where the crown, leaves and 20 merges with the rim is a visual effect like the $2.50 and $5.00 gold coins designed by Bela Pratt in 1908. In 2008 the reverse was changed as were all denominations showing a deconstructed British coat of arms. The 20 pence show a portion of the lower right shield. The obverse was modified slightly to accommodate the date that was removed from the reverse.

During the change, a mule error was created where the old obverse was matched with a new reverse creating a dateless coin. These error coins are extremely popular and sell on eBay between $60 and $110 depending on condition. Being a high mintage circulating coin putting together a set should not be much of a challenge as nice unc pieces only sell for a few dollars each. The only challenge is finding a dealer who carries the coins.

A box of Lincoln cents

This month's coin of the month is the results of a roll search through a $25 box of Lincoln cents. Last May, Don C. purchased a box of cents from Tim T. in hopes of getting a fresh box of 2015 cents. When he opened the box, he found they were in fact older cents. So, at the end of the June meeting Don gave me the box and challenged me to search through each roll and report my findings.

This kind of challenge appealed to me, and I accepted. To paraphrase Forrest Gump, "Roll searching is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get." To better track my findings, I got some graph paper and listed each date-mintmark combination since 1959. I also listed most of the major varieties such as the large and small dates of 1960, 1970 and 1982. Other varieties I kept an eye out for were the various double dies and wide and narrow AM varieties. I was also on the lookout for errors such as die cracks, filled dies and repunched mintmarks.

As I opened each roll, I placed a hash mark by each date and kept a running total. Searching through two rolls a day for 25 days, here is what I found.

Wheat cents – 13 (1919-S, 1939-P, 1945-P, 1946-P, 1950-S, 1951-D, 1953-D, 1954-D, 1956-D (2), 1957-P, 1957-D (2))

Lincoln Memorial Copper – 606

Lincoln Memorial Zinc – 1409

Lincoln Shield – 450

Canadian – 6 (1971, 1978 (2), 1980, 1981, 1998)

Too damaged to identify – 14

Philadelphia Copper – 193

Denver Copper – 418

San Francisco Copper – 7

Philadelphia Lincoln Memorial Zinc – 770

Philadelphia Lincoln Shield – 171

Denver Lincoln Memorial Zinc – 1240

Denver Lincoln Shield – 279

Lincoln Memorial cents not found 1969-P, 1970-S LD, 1970-S SD, 1972-S, and 1973-S.

Date most found 2014-D – 126

Oldest coin found 1919-S

Unfortunately, I did not find any significant error or rare dates. Many coins, especially the zinc coins were corroded or damaged in one way or another.

1903-O Morgan Dollar

This month's coin of the month is the 1903-O Morgan dollar. Despite a mintage of 4,450,000 this coin was once considered to be the top rarity of the Morgan dollar series. In the Red Book it was speculated that most of this date was melted in the Pittman act of 1918. In the early 1960's some major dealers had never even seen an uncirculated piece. That is until November 1962 when the treasury released thousands of bags of dollars from storage.

Soon reports came in of people finding this coin by the hundreds and thousands. Before the news really spread, some unknowing dealers bought a few pieces at current book value. In the 1963 Red Book, published in mid-1962, the 1903-O was valued at $400 in xf and $1500 n uncirculated. In the same edition, the 1893-S was priced at $125 and $1200, and the 1895 proof was $1500.

Just days after the news of the find spread, prices for this coin began to drop. It was not long before the price dropped from $1500 to $15 or less. The big drop only lasted a few months as the final release quantities became known; prices rose slightly. In the 1964 Red Book the new values were $15 and $30. As mentioned before the dealers who bought at the high prices took quite a hit. One way to look at this price change is before November 1962 a 1903-O was worth about 50 Elgin half dollars. At its lowest value it took two 1903-O to buy a single Elgin half.

As the price recovered the value rose to where it is currently, that is about three Elgin halves equal one 1903-O. The 1903-O was not the only date to suffer great losses with the 1962 release. Three other dates were affected, 1898-O, 1902-O and 1904-O. Comparing the 1963 and 1964 Red Book the 1898-O in uncirculated went from $300 to $5. The 1904-O went from $350 to $3.50, and the 1902-O went from $35 to $3.

1954 Canada Devils Face Notes

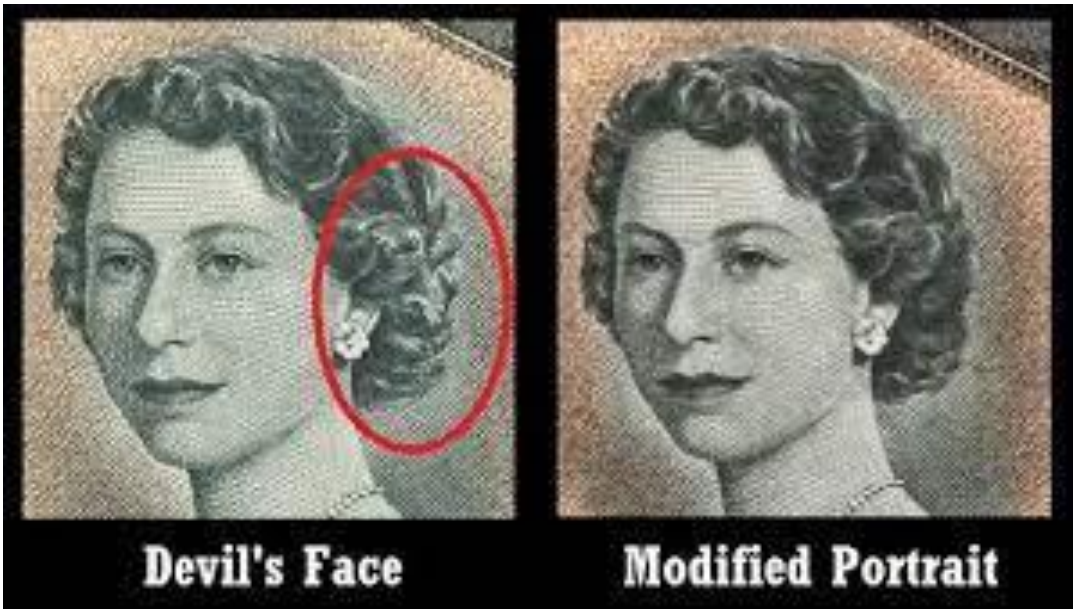
This month’s currencies of the month are the 1954 Canadian Devils Face notes. The reason they are called Devil’s Face is due to the shading of the curls behind her ear resembles a Devil’s face. Some claim an anti-royal sympathizer placed the image deliberately. Conventional wisdom holds the creation of the image is

coincidence. The source of the portrait comes from a photograph taken by Yusuf Karsh in 1951. In that picture Elizabeth is wearing a tiara and if one examines the hair behind the ear, a faint face can be seen. When the picture was engraved, the engraver removed the tiara and during the engraving process, the facial features became more apparent.

When the notes were released in September 1954, the Devil's face was apparently unnoticed. If it was noticed, it was not mentioned. The same portrait appears on all eight denominations of notes issued that year. The denominations were $1, $2, $5, $10, $20, $50, $100, and $1000. Each bill has text in both English and French and each denomination is printed in a different color. The reverse of each bill shows a different landscape scene from various Canadian locations. In March 1956, the first complaint about the portrait was printed in a Canadian newspaper. Only after this was the portrait modified.

Although the notes were never recalled, they eventually disappeared from circulation. In the year and a half, the Devil's face notes were printed with two sets of signatures. There are also asterisk notes which are like our star notes. The two set of signatures are J. E. Coyne / G. F. Towers and J. E. Coyne / J. R. Beattie.

A set of eight notes will run about $3500 to $4500 in vf condition. If one just wants a single example note, a well circulated $1 will cost $5 to $30 in grades good to vf.



1986 Statue of Liberty $5 Gold

This month's coin of the month is the 1986 Statue of Liberty $5 Gold commemorative. The reason the coin was issued was for the statues 100th anniversary and to raise funds for its restoration. It took almost two years for Congress to work out all the details for this coin. When they were done, they decided to issue a three-coin set of a half, dollar, and this $5 coin. In addition, with a limited mintage of 500,000, the gold coins were snapped up quickly.

Offered in both Proof and mint state, the proof version proves to be the most popular. The coin was offered both individually and in a three coin and six-coin set. Elizabeth Jones designed the coin that features an extreme close-up view of the face of liberty. On the top edge is 1986 and along the right is Liberty. One unusual feature of the word liberty is where the letters meet with the rays coming from the portrait those letters are incuse. The mintmark appears just to the right of the chin. In contrast to the obverse, the reverse is very plain. The central image is an eagle about to pounce upon some prey. Circling the image is two rings of lettering. The outer ring reads United States of America and Five Dollars separated by 13 stars. The inner ring reads E Pluribus Unum and In god we trust. The coins size is the same a a standard US $5 gold piece. The coin is .85 inch and weighs 8.36 grams of .900 gold. Actual gold weight is .24 troy oz. Collecting this coin is easy. The price is tied to the price of gold and a nice specimen can be had for $300-350.

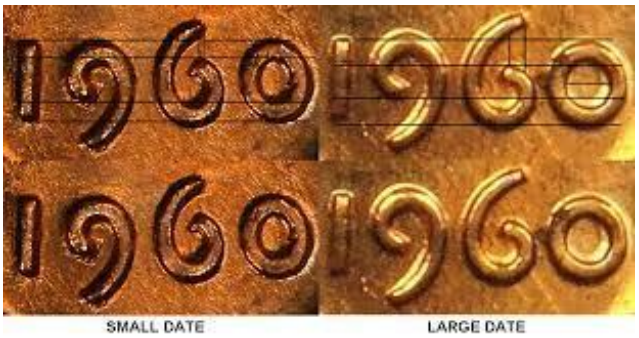
1960 Large and Small Date Cents

This month's coins of the month are the large and small date varieties of cents struck in 1960. When the cents for this year were first made the 6 and 0 were smaller in relation to the other numbers. As production began there were striking problems causing the mint to re engrave the date to make the numbers more uniform.

This created a perceived rarity, and some coin speculators lost their minds. In the first few months after the variety was discovered bags of Philadelphia small date cents were selling for $12,000. Today mintage estimates for the small date coins are about 2 million for Philadelphia issues and 500 million for those from Denver. The balance of the mintages from each mint is large date coins. At these mintages, there will be an adequate supply of these coins for a long time.

There are several ways to differentiate a small from large date cent. The easiest way is to look at the 6. Follow the inside loop and see where it would intersect with the right side. If the tail above that point is short it is a small date. On large date coins, the tail is longer. Another was to tell is look at the 1 and 9. On small date coins the numbers are level. On large date coins, the 9 is a bit higher. Lastly in the 0, on small date coins looks like a donut. On large date coins, the 0 is more like a bicycle tire.

While these variations are interesting, there is an even more interesting variety. While making dies, a mint worker used both a large and small date hub creating a large over small date variety. On these coins, the difference in the numbers is obvious. Collecting this coin can be as easy or hard as a collector makes it. Circulated pieces can still be found in circulation at face value. The Philadelphia small date is the scarcer one and Bu specimens range from $4 to $300 in MS63 to 67. All others cost from 50 cents to $150 in the same grades. Proof coins from this year also exist in small and large date versions. The large dates are $2 to $25, and the small dates are $12 to $50. The exceedingly rare large over small date proof can cost up to $2500 in cameo proof.



Heads and Tails

This month's coins of the month are the US coins that show the same person on both the obverse and reverse. Looking through the Red Book, I found at least 10 that fell in this category. In chronological order, they are as follows. In 1900, the Lafayette Dollar shows the French General along with George Washington on the obverse. The reverse shows Lafayette riding a horse. The Missouri Centennial half shows a frontiersman on the obverse and the same man on the reverse conversing with an Indian. From 1934 to 1938 the mint struck a series of halves featuring Daniel Boone. The reverse shows Boone also with an Indian in a pose like the Missouri coin.

The next coin is our club's logo, the Elgin Half. The obverse shows a close-up view of the Pioneer Scout who also appears on the reverse leading the group. The most common coin on this list is the Lincoln cents of 1959-2008. The reverse depicts the Lincoln memorial and on well-struck coins, the faint image of the statue inside can be seen. In 1999 the mint started the State Quarters program all showing Washington on the obverse. On the New Jersey quarter, Washington is seen in a boat crossing the Delaware river.

On the South Dakota quarter he is seen as part of Mt. Rushmore and once more on the Mt. Rushmore State Parks quarter. For the Lincoln bicentennial in 2009, two cents featured images of Lincoln on both sides. The first is the formative years cent where he is seen reading a book. This was followed by the Professional life cent where Lincoln is shown giving a speech. This would be an interesting set to put together. Most coins can be pulled from circulation at face value. The early commemoratives are a lot more expensive with some costing several hundred dollars each.

Musical Instruments on Coins

This month's coins of the month examine the use of musical instruments as coin design elements. Chances are you may have one or more of these coins in your pocket at this time. Coins that ring a bell are the Franklin half, Eisenhower Bi-Centennial dollar, Sesquicentennial half, and Delaware half. The bell on the Delaware half is in the schoolhouse belfry. Keeping rhythm on drums are the Bi-Centennial quarter, American Samoa quarter and the Civil War half.

The Tennessee quarter pulls triple duty by showing a guitar, fiddle, and trumpet. The instruments represent three kinds of music. Those three being Country, Blues and Jazz. The trumpet is also featured on the Louisiana quarter. Also, the Eliza Johnson bullion medal, people are dancing to music from a violin. Duke Ellington is shown seated at a piano on the Washington, D. C. quarter.

A Lyre, an instrument from ancient Greece is shown being played on the Cincinnati half. Lastly, on the Civil War $5 gold coin, a soldier is seen playing a bugle. Perhaps he is playing taps to signal the end of this article. But before I go just one last thing. Collecting a set of these coins is easy. Most can be bought for less than $10, sometimes much less. The most expensive ones are the Delaware, Cincinnati, Civil War $5, and Johnson medal. For those you can expect to pay between $300 and $600 each.

A Box of Nickels

This month's coins of the month are the coins I found searching a box of nickels. Earlier this year, I reported my findings from a box of cents. This month I decided to give nickels a try. The standard box of nickels is 50 $2 rolls each

containing 40 coins. The rolls were machine wrapped and I hoped to get a nice mix of dates and perhaps some silver.

Before even one roll was opened, I prepared a checklist of all the dates and mintmarks struck for circulation. When the list was finished, I found there were 174 possible date and mint combinations between 1938 and 2015. I also washed a small glass jar to hold the first coin found of each date and mint. Unless the coin was unusual in some way, I only kept the first coin found.

With this plan in mind, I then began searching. I have always contended the Jefferson nickel was a good coin for roll searches. The series is common but there are some interesting dates and the possibility of finding silver. Now for the results of the search. Out of the 174 possible, I found 129 or 74.25%. From 1938 to 1963, there are 69 possible and I only found 24 or 33.18%. Only a single 1944-P silver nickel turned up in this box. From 1964 to 2015, I did much better, finding all 105 possible.

This included both 2009's a scarce recent issue. The lowest mintage coin found was a 1956-D at 35.2 million struck. While searching through the rolls, I expected to find many dated 1964. In this box there were 32 Philadelphia strikes and 35 Denver.

There were also three foreign coins. Two Canadian nickels, both dated 1985. The most unusual coin found was a 2004 dated British 20 pence. This coin has seven sides and has a face value of about 28 cents. Soon I will return the coins to circulation and perhaps do another search in the future.

Horses on Coins

This month's coins of the month are the US coins that feature Horses as design element. Since the turn of the 20th century, twelve coins have featured Horses and an argument can be made for a thirteenth. The first coin to feature a Horse is the Lafayette dollar showing the General riding his mount. This coin is followed in 1915 by the Pan Pacific $2.50 gold. This coin has Columbia riding a Hippocampus, a creature that is half Horse and half fish. Technically, it is not a Horse but is close enough to be included on this list.

Real Horses return on the Stone Mountain half showing the Horses of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. Almost 60 years passed till the appearance of the

next Horse. That coin being the Washington half of 1982. The next coin featuring a Horse is the Civil War $5 gold coin showing a soldier on a Horse playing a bugle. The next group of Horse coins appears in the 50 state quarter series. The four states are Delaware, Kentucky, Nevada, and Wyoming. The other circulating Horse coin, if anyone would use it, is the2012 Native American dollar.

Lastly this list concludes with three gold bullion non circulating legal tender coins. They are part of the first spouse series and include Jacksons Liberty, VanBurens Liberty and Julia Grant. The coins are half ounce rounds with a $10 face value thrown in to keep them legal. Collecting these coins presents a moderate challenge. You can find the quarters in your pocket. The silver coins are easy to obtain with the dollar being the most expensive. The gold coins are more of a challenge with the prices changing as the price of gold rises and falls.

Very Rare Canadian Coins

This month’s coin of the month is a selection of five exceedingly rare Canadian coins. Each of these coins has a known population of less than 280 pieces, some a few as two extant. The first coin examined is the 1921 half dollar. This coin has a reported mintage of over 200,000. Due to lack of demand for half dollars, this coin was never released. In 1929 when demand rose the remaining inventory of this coin was melted along with some from 1920. The recovered silver was then struck into 1929 coins. About 75 pieces are known coming from sales of specimen sets and individual coin sold at the mint.

The reason for the melting was to not confuse the public by issuing past dated coins. The Charlton catalog values this coin from between $35,000 and $85,000 in grades from VG to AU. Specimen coins are valued between $75,000 and $150,000 in grades SP63 to 65.

The next four coins are from 2000. That year the mint experimented with a multi ply steel alloy. During that year Canada issued a set of millennium

quarters. Each month a different reverse was used. The regular alloy was pure nickel, but some October and December coins were struck in the new alloy. About five October and two December coins are known. There are also two known 2000 P Caribou reverse quarters known in the new alloy. These coins are so rare no value is given in the Charlton catalog.

Lastly, another 2016 coin will be discussed. This time it is the half dollar. At the opening of the Winnipeg plating facility about 276 desk clocks were given to select attendees. The cover of the clock contained a 2000 P half. When the people who received the clock realized how rare the coin was, they removed the coin to sell to collectors. Today the coin is valued between $7,000 and $8,000.

Arkansas Centennial Half

This month's coin of the month is the Arkansas half dollar. First issued the year before the state's centennial this issue concluded three years after. During its run, this coin was plagued by some of the abuses common to other coins of this era. In 1935, the Philadelphia mint distributed a net total of just over 13,000 pieces and sold for $1 each. Seeing an opportunity, B. Max Mehl cut a deal to have 5,500 more struck ad Denver and San Francisco that he then resold for $2.75 each or $5.00 for the pair. The set of three was also offered at $6.50.

In 1936 equal amounts were struck at all three mints and offered at $1 each. Soon the price was raised to $1.50 and finally up to $6.75 for a set of three. In 1937, the price was raised to $8.75 a set and in 1938 again rose to $10.00. There is a disagreement as to which side is the obverse. Some claim the portrait side is the obverse others say it is the eagle side. In this article, I will use the portrait side. The obverse features a pair of jugate portraits one of a Quapaw Chief and the other of a rather plain looking version of Liberty. Below the portraits is Arkansas Centennial and the dates appear to the left. Liberty appears on her cap.

The reverse shows an eagle perched on the sun holding a ribbon marked in God we trust and e pluribus unum. Above is United States of America and written on the sun is half dollar and the date. Behind the eagle is a half diamond with 13 stars. Above the eagle's head is Arkansas. Above the word is one star and below is three stars. The single star represents the Confederacy, and the three stars are for Spain, France, and the United States. Breen contends the coins images are Confederate symbols. The 13 stars and rays are for the 13 confederate states and the eagle perched on the sun means the south will rise again. In addition, the 1936 date was the 75th anniversary of the Confederacy. Edward Everett Burr designed the coin and Emily Bates prepared the models. Prices for a type coin range from $115 to $1600 in MS63 to 67. The 1939 issues generally run twice as much.

Two heads are better than one

This month's coins of the month are commemorative coins featuring two portraits on the obverse. Since 1900, 17 coins feature this type of design. In chronological order, they are as follows. The first coin of this type is the Lafayette dollar. The two portraits here are of George Washington and the marquis de Lafayette. The Alabama centennial half of 1921 is one of the few coins to depict a living person. The coin shows Governors Wyatt Bibb and T. E. Kilby, In 1923, the Monroe doctrine half features two Presidents. They are John Quincy Adams and James Monroe. The Huguenot-Walloon half depicts the images of both Admiral Coligny and William the Silent.

The first Civil war theme half of this series is the Stone Mountain. The coin shows both Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson and Robert E. Lee on horseback. The Sesquicentennial half of 1926 also depicts a living person. They are first President George Washington and then current President Calvin Coolidge. Allegorical figures adorn the obverse of the Arkansas half. Those figures are an

Indian Chief and a representation of Liberty. The Providence, Rhode Island half depicts Roger Williams in a boat, greeting an Indian and requesting a high five. The next Civil War coin is for the 75th anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg. The two men shown are typical Union and Confederate soldiers. The coin honoring the battle of Antietam shows opposing Generals George McClellan and Robert E. Lee. The last of the classic commemoratives show the faces of George Washington Carver and Booker T. Washington.

In the modern commemorative series, Dwight Eisenhower is depicted two ways. One image is as a General and the other as the President. The First Flight commemorative shows both Orville and Wilbur Wright doing their best Smothers Brothers impersonation. He Bi centennial of the Corps of Discovery is remembered by depicting both Lewis and Clark. The US Army dollar shows a pair of modern soldiers. Lastly, five-star Generals are shown on a pair of coins. One coin shows Henry "Hap" Arnold and Omar Bradley. The other coin has George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower.

Building a Bridge

This month's coins of the month are five US coins featuring a bridge as a design element. Three of the coins are part of the State quarter – America the Beautiful series. The other two are found in the early commemorative half set. The first quarter is the Rhode Island quarter. This coin features the Pell bridge spanning Narragansett Bay. The foreground shows a sailboat alluding to the area's history with the Americas Cup races.

The quarter from West Virginia shows the New Gorge Bridge. The Bridge is popular with Parachute base jumpers. The last of the quarters is from the America the Beautiful series. The Chickasaw national recreation park in Oklahoma is home to the Lincoln Bridge. The bridge is made of limestone and was dedicated in 1909 for the Lincoln centennial.

The other two bridge coins come from the early commemorative series. The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge half dollar shows the Golden Gate Bridge. The coin was issued for the opening of the bridge in November 1936. Drivers using the 3.14-mile-long bridge must pay a toll that ranges from $2.50 to $6.00. Lastly, the Antietam half of 1937 rounds off the list. The bridge shown on this coin is the Burnside bridge and is the smallest bridge in this collection. Generals McClellan and Lee lead their troops in this battle that claimed 5,000 lives and over 20,000 wounded. The battle was also one of student versus teacher since McClellan studied under Lee at West Point.

Putting together this set is not difficult. The quarters can be found in pocket change, The half dollars are more expensive. The pain in average uncirculated condition should run about $800.

Foreign words or phrases on coins

This month’s coins of the month are the various non-English words and phrases on US coins. By far, the most common Latin phrase on US coins is E Pluribus Unum. This phrase translates to Out of many one. While this appears on all current coins, this was not always the case. Most coins before the 1880’s did not use this phrase and even some commemorative coins omitted it.

Other Latin words are Dirigo from the Maine half means I Direct. The Olympic motto Citius Altius Fortius meaning Faster Higher Stronger is on the 1992 Olympic dollar. On the Hudson half dollar is Et Decus Et Pretium Recti or the honor and reward of the virtuous. There are several Spanish phrases, Esto Perpetua from the Idaho quarter means Let it be perpetual. Isla de Encanto on the Puerto Rico quarter is Island of Enchantment. Cabeza de Vaca on the Spanish trail half means Head of a cow.

The Hawaiian quarter has a long phrase, Ua Mau Ke Ea O Ka Aina I Ka Pono. This means the life of the land is preserved in righteousness of the people. The Guam quarter says Guahan I Tano Man Chamorro or Guam land of the Chamorro. The American Samoa quarter has Samoa Mua Mua Le Atua meaning Samoa God is first. Collecting these coins can be a major challenge. Some can be found in circulation, but some early dollars and halves can cost hundreds or thousands of dollars.

Planes, Trains and Automobiles

This month's coins of the month are not the Steve Martin, John Candy movie but the US coins that feature planes, trains, and automobiles as design elements. Of these design elements, planes are used most often. Orville and Wilbur Wright's flyer is seen on five different coins. The first two are part of the state quarter series. They are the 2001 North Carolina and the 2002 Ohio. In 2003 the mint issued a three-coin set for the 100th anniversary of the first flight. The set consists of a clad half, a silver dollar, and a gold five dollar.

War planes providing air support for soldiers are seen on the WWII 50th anniversary half and dollar. A jet fighter is seen on a 1991 Korea War Memorial dollar. Two trains appear on the 2007 Utah quarter. The trains are the Union Pacific number 119 and the Jupiter. The image comes from the golden spike ceremony at Promontory Point, Utah creating a transcontinental rail system. The event took place on May 10, 1869. Lastly the image of an automobile appears on the 2002 Indiana quarter. The car is an Indianapolis 500 race car. The race, held just before Memorial Day, is still one of the biggest sports events of the year. Most of the coins in this article can be found in pocket changes. The clad and silver commemoratives can be purchased for $30 or less. The gold coin is priced near bullion value which is currently in the $325 to $350 range.

Coins of 1908

This month's coins of the month are the coins struck for circulation in 1908 the previous year the Cubs won the World Series. That year four mints were in operation striking coins ranging in value from one cent to twenty dollars. Not all mints struck all denominations. The mints were Philadelphia, Denver, New Orleans, and San Francisco.

This article will detail what coin was struck at what mint and how many. Cents. The Philadelphia mint struck 32.3 million Indian cents making this the most common coin from this year. This was also the first year the San Francisco mint struck cents. This coin is a semi-key with a mintage of 1.1 million.

Nickels. This denomination was only struck in Philadelphia. A mintage of 22.7 million makes this one common and easy to find.

Dimes. Barber's dime was struck at all four mints. Mintages are Philadelphia 10.6 million, 7.5 million Denver, 1.8 million New Orleans and 3.2 million San Francisco. This is the last dime design not to feature the mottos e pluribus unum and in God we trust.

Quarters. Like the dime, quarters were also struck at all four mints. Mintages are Philadelphia 4.2 million, Denver 5.8 million, New Orleans 6.2 million and San Francisco. 784 thousand.

Halves. Finishing up the string of Barber coins is the half dollar. Once again, they were struck at all four mints. Mintages are Philadelphia 1.3 million, Denver 3.3 million, New Orleans 5.4 million and 1.6 million San Francisco.

Four denominations of gold coins were made in 1908. The first was the quarter eagle and was struck only in Philadelphia and has a mintage of 565 thousand.

Half Eagles were struck in three mints. Those were Philadelphia 578 thousand, Denver 148 thousand and San Francisco 82 thousand.

There were two types of Eagles made this year. The first type omitted the motto in God we trust. Mintages are Philadelphia 33.5 thousand and Denver 210 thousand. After the motto was added Philadelphia made 341 thousand, Denver 836 thousand and San Francisco 59.9 thousand.

Double Eagles. These coins were also struck with and without mottos. No motto coins from Philadelphia are4.27 million and Denver 663 thousand. Mintages of

coins with the motto are 156 thousand from Philadelphia, 349 thousand Denver and 22 thousand San Francisco. A mint set from1908 including the gold coins would consist of 29 coins and have a face value of $170.97. Most of the copper, nickel and silver coins can be found circulated between $1 and $20. The gold coins are valued based on bullion and are priced anywhere from a couple of hundred to a few thousand dollars.

Coins of 1957

This month's coins of the month are the coins struck for circulation in 1957, the year our club was founded. Unlike today, the mint only struck coins for circulation along with a basic five-coin proof set. All circulating coins were struck at the Philadelphia and Denver mints. The Philadelphia mint also struck the proof sets. This article will examine each denomination struck.

Cents. In 1957, the Wheat ear reverse was still in use. The design ended two years later with the introduction of the Lincoln memorial reverse. The Philadelphia mint struck 282 million and the Denver mint added 1.05 billion. Both coins are very common and are sometimes found in pocket change,

Nickels. The Jefferson nickel turned 19 years old this year. Mintage from Philadelphia was 38 million while Denver made 136 million. These coins are also easy to find in circulation.

Dimes. This is the first of three silver coins struck this year. Being silver, it

seldom shows up in circulation but can be found with some searching. The actual silver weight is .072 troy ounces. Mintages are 160 million Philadelphia and 113 million Denver.

Quarters. The silver Washington quarter celebrated its silver anniversary in 1957. This coin is a bit harder to find in circulation. This coin has an actual silver weight of .18 troy ounces. Philadelphia struck 46 million while Denver made 77 million.

Halves. The newest silver coin from this year is the Franklin half. In this era, half dollars usually circulated. This large silver coin contains .36 troy ounces. The Philadelphia mint made 4 million and Denver made 5 million.

Collecting the 10 mint state coins from this year should provide little challenge. The Government issue mint set with two of each date and mintmark is expensive at $600 but private mint sets made from rolls are more affordable and can be had for $40 or so. The proof set usually runs in the $25 to $30 range, High grade certified coins and Cameo proofs are considerably more expensive.

Living people on US coins

This month's coins of the month are the commemorative coins that featured portraits of people still alive when the coin was issued. The practice of not having a living person on our coins stems back to the 1790's when President Washington objected to placing his image on a coin. The policy became law in the 1860's when Spencer Clark put his face on fractional currency and Congress was not amused. Of the four coins in this article, three are halves and one silver dollar.

The first coin is the Alabama Centennial. Although Alabama celebrated its centennial in 1919, the coin did not come out until 1921. The obverse shows the state's first Governor William Bibb and the then current Governor Thomas Kilby. Kilby was born in 1865 and died in 1943. The current value for this coin ranges from $195 in Au to $2,250 in MS65. The next coin is the Sesquicentennial of American Independence. Issued in 1926 this coin was struck to raise funds for an international exposition in Philadelphia. Again, the coin features two portraits. The portraits are of President Washington and President Coolidge. Coolidge was born in 1873 and lived until 1933. The coins are currently valued between $70 in Au and $1,750 in MS65.

The last half in this group is the Lynchburg Sesquicentennial of 1936. The obverse features then Senator Carter Glass, a notable resident of Lynchburg. Glass, who lived from 1858 to 1946 also served as Secretary of the Treasury and as a member of Congress. The value of this coin ranges from $200 in AU to $275 in MS65.

The final coin of this article is the 1995 Special Olympics dollar. Eunice Kennedy Shriver, sister of John, Robert and Edward Kennedy is shown on the obverse. Born in 1921 and passing in 2009, Eunice founded Camp Shriver which later evolved into the Special Olympics program. This coin Is only collected in high grade mint state and proof. The current values are $43 and $46, respectively.

Author's update. When reviewing this article, I realized there was a fifth coin featuring a living person, the 1936 Robinson-Arkansas. Joseph T. Robinson lived from 1972 to 1937 and was Governor of Arkansas from 1913 to 1937. In 2017 a BU example was worth about $100.

1937 Roanoke Half

This month's coin of the month is the Roanoke, North Carolina half dollar. This coin marked the 350th anniversary of the first English settlement in North America. The colony only lasted 3 years before mysteriously vanishing in 1590. The coin is a dual commemorative, not only honoring the colony but the birth of the first English child in North America, Virginia Dare.

William Marks Simpson designed this coin on which he tried to place as much text as possible. Although, the record for most text on a coin probably goes to the Norfolk, Virginia half. The obverse shows Sir Walter Raleigh dressed in a ruffled collar sporting a stylish beard and a cap with a feather. It is a look that would allow him to walk into any hipster café today and not raise an eyebrow. Around the portrait is United States of America, e pluribus unum, liberty, 1937, Sir Walter Raleigh and Half Dollar.

The reverse shows a full-length portrait of Ellinor Dare holding baby Virginia. Flanking the figure are two sailing ships. Circling the images are the words the colonization of Roanoke Island, North Carolina, The birth of Virginia Dare, in God we trust and 1587-1937. The coin is scarce but easily obtainable. Its mintage of 29,030 is in line with many commemoratives of the era. Values range form $145 in AU to $250 in MS 66.

Coins of 1932

This month's coins of the month are all the coins struck by the US mint in 1932. The great depression was in full force in 1932 and the mint had to cut back on production due to lack of demand for new coins. The cutbacks were so severe that several denominations were not struck all year. Therefore, there are no 1932 nickels, dimes, halves, silver dollars, gold quarter and half eagles. In this article, I will list all seven coins that were struck for circulation.

Cents. Lincoln cents were struck at both Philadelphia and Denver. Mintages were a bit lower than recent years at 9 and 10.5 million. Still today you may find one in circulation. Collectors can expect to pay a dollar or two for a nice high grade circulated piece up to $15 to $30 for choicer mint state examples.

Quarters. Washington quarters were struck for the first time in 1932. All three mints produced examples of this coin that was intended to be a one year only issue. The coin became popular and by 1934 replaced the Standing Liberty quarter. Philadelphia struck 5.4 million and Denver and San Francisco made about 400 thousand each. It is unlikely to find these coins in circulation. The Philadelphia issue will cost from $8 for a circulated piece to about $50 in MS 63. The branch mint issues are more expensive. Prices for these start at over $150 and rise to almost $2,000 in choice condition.

The other two coins made this year are gold coins and both only struck in Philadelphia. The $10 gold is the most common of its type with a mintage off over 4.4 million. Examples of this coin will set you back between $800 and $1,500 in grades up to ms63. On the other end of the spectrum is the $20 gold. Even with a mintage over a million, it is one of the keys of the series. Examples are highlights of major auctions and depending on the grade can sell between $25,000 and $75,000. If someone got one of each of these coins at face value in 1932 for $30.77, they would have a set worth over $50,000 today.

1921 Morgan Dollars

This month's coins of the month are all the Morgan dollars issued in 1921. One of the provisions of the Pittman act states that all silver dollars sold and melted must be replaced by new dollar coins. Since the hubs for the Morgan dollar were destroyed in 1910 and the new Peace dollar was not yet ready, the mint was in a bind. What the Mint did to deal with this problem was to take a previously struck coin and use it as a model. Despite their best efforts, the coin looks more like a reproduction than an original design. Each of the three mints, Philadelphia, Denver, and San Francisco produced 1921 Morgan dollars. This is also the only year the Denver mint struck Morgan dollars. The actual mintmarks on these branch mint coins are much smaller than previous Morgan dollar mintmarks.

Reviewing the mintage figures it shows the 1921 issues have the first, third and fourth highest output of the series. Philadelphia struck 44.7 million, San Francisco made 21.7 million and Denver 20.3 million. As recently as the late 1960's the Philly coin sold for under $3 and either branch mint issue went for under $6. Today, the coins are still plentiful but finding sharply struck pieces with minimal bag marks is getting harder. Values for the Philly issue range from $37 in AU to $50 in MS 63 and $725 in MS 66. Circulated values for the Denver and San Francisco issues are comparable to the Philly issue. In MS 63

both are valued at $75. For MS 66 coins the Denver is worth $1000, and the San Francisco is $5000.
A limited number of proof coins were also struck. They are classified as either Chapman or Zerbe pieces. The Chapman coins are more valuable at up to $50,000 in Proof 65 while the Zerbe coins are a bargain at just $12,500 in the same grade.

1857 Large Cent

This month's coin of the month is the 1857 large cent. This coin marks the end of an era being the last of the large copper cents. After production ended in January, it was replaced by the smaller copper-nickel flying eagle cent. The main reason for the change was the cost of producing the cent was over face value (sound familiar) and the public disliked using the large coin (also sound familiar).
Christian Gobrecht created this coin in the 1830's.He also used the same basic obverse design on the half cent, $2.50 gold, $5.00 gold and $10 gold. The obverse shows a left facing portrait wearing her hair tied in the back with a beaded ribbon. On her coronet is liberty and circling the portrait are 12 stars and the date. Inside the rim are a series of denticles.
In the center of the reverse is one cent. Around these words is a wreath and around the wreath is United States of America. As on the obverse, inside the rim is a series of denticles. The mintage for this issue was a paltry 333,456 pieces in both large and small dates. A limited amount of proof coins was also struck. Today there is an estimated papulation of 10,000 to 20,000 business and 100 to

125 proof coins extant.
As earlier mentioned, one of the downfalls of the coin was its cumbersome size. This coin measures 27.5 mm and weighs 10.89 grams. In comparison, a presidential dollar is 26.5 mm and weighs 8.1 grams. Being the last year of issue having a small mintage and a smaller survival rate the values for this coin are moderately high. Values for the large date range from $150 in VF to $1,100 in ms63. The small date runs from $200 to $1,250 in the same grades. Proof coins are valued at $3,250 on pr60 to $67,500 in pr67.

1916 Panama 2 ½ Centesimo

This month's coin of the month is the 1916 Panama 2 ½ centesimo. This coin is unusual due to the use of a fraction in the denomination. Most other coins use either a decimal or words to indicate the value. When I first saw this coin, I wondered how this coin would fit into commerce. Looking through the Krause catalog, I noticed Panama also issued a half cent coin not long before. This way if a person made a purchase for an even cent amount and used this coin, they could receive the proper change.
The obverse shows the coat of arms of Panama. Written on a ribbon is Pro Mundi Beneficio. This translates to for the benefit of the world. The benefit mentioned is the Panama Canal. Above the coat of arms are seven stars. The stars represent the seven provinces in Panama. The number has since increased to ten provinces. Circling the images is Republica De Panama and the date.
The center of the reverse is 21/2 with seven stars again below the fraction. Around this are the words Dos Y Medio Centesimos De Balboa. The coin is about the same size as a nickel. It is 21 mm, 5 grams of copper nickel. In 1916, 800,000 pieces were minted. Sometime after the issue the Panamanian government demonetized this coin, so it is no longer legal tender. Collecting this

coin presents little challenge. It is common in grades below fine. In grades above XF it is a little scarcer and is somewhat rare in mint state. Values for the coin as listed in the Krause catalog are VF $10, XF $40, MS60 $60, MS63 $85 and MS65 $120.

Some lesser-known Lincoln cent double dies.

This month's coins of the month are some of the more obscure double dies of the Lincoln cent series. All varieties discussed here are found in the Mega Red Book. While most collectors are aware of the major double dies not everyone is aware of these dates. The first is the 1917-P. Most of the doubling occurs in the date. A good loupe is needed to see this one. Values can range from $85 in good to $20,000 in MS66 red. Next is the 1934-P. The doubling here is harder to see. The focal point is also the date. A MS63 specimen is valued at $250. The 1936-P is moderately well known. The doubling is easier to spot than the previous coins. The values for this coin range from $72 in fine to $300 in MS64. The 1958-P has extraordinarily strong doubling. The extant of doubling rivals the 1955 in ease of viewing. Focal points are Liberty and in God we trust. So far, only three examples are known, and values have not been established.
A coin known more for large and small dates; the 1970-S also has a double die. Doubling on this coin is like the 1995, especially in Liberty. A MS64 example sold for over $10,000 in 2008. The last two only exhibit minor doubling. They are the 1980-P and 1997-P. On the latter, only the ear is doubled. In mint state both coins are valued in the $225 to $500 range. These are just a few of the many varieties out there. Give these dates a second look. Who knows you just might find one?

Who wants to be a millionaire?

This month's currency of the month concern foreign currency with high denominations that can be purchased cheaply. The first part of this article deals with current foreign currency and the second part will deal with obsolete currency. The three best countries to get 1 million in current currency are Iran, Indonesia, and Vietnam. The figures given are based on exchange rates on August 29. Therefore, a million Iranian rials are worth $30.43 US dollars. Similarly, a million Indonesian rupiah are worth $43.65. Also, a similar amount of Vietnamese dong is worth $75.00 in American money. The purchase these foreign currencies may incur exchange fees so your actual cost may be a bit higher than the figures given.

If all you are looking for are notes with a lot of zeros, there are several obsolete currencies that will fill the bill. German notes of the early 1920's is interesting and for the most part, very inexpensive. Bills with denominations up to 50 million are available for $10 or less. When the notes were issued, they were so plentiful and worth so little, people burned bundles in their stoves as it was cheaper than buying firewood.

A more extreme case occurred in Zimbabwe. In 2007, notes were printed in denominations in the millions, billions and even trillions. The largest being the 100 trillion-dollar note. In 2007, these notes sold for as little as $1 each. Today, the same bills sell between $50 to $70. Many notes with denominations up to 10 trillion can be bought for $5 or less.

As large as these denominations are, the grand champion is still Hungary in 1946. That year they stopped using numbers and wrote out each denomination. The largest being the egymillard B-Pengo. That translates to 1 billion billion Pengo. In Hungary, a billion is equal to our trillion. So as a number its 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. This note was never officially issued but is sold every now and then. The largest issued was a mere 100 million billion Pengo. B-Pengo note usually sell between $10 and $40.

Canadian Toonies

This month's coin of the month is the Canadian $2 coin commonly known as the toonie. This coin first appeared in 1996 as a replacement for the $2 bill. Even though a single $2 bill cost less to make than a $2 coin, the coin has an expectant useful life of 29 years as opposed to 2 years for the bill. When first issued, several nicknames were suggested for the coin. Among those were bearie for the animal on the reverse, bearly and doubloonie for double loonie. My favorite was moonie because it depicts the Queen with a bear behind.
The most obvious feature of the coin is that its bimetallic. The original coin issued in 1996 was 28 mm and weighed 7.3 grams. The outer ring was pure nickel, and the core was aluminum bronze. The core planchet was slightly smaller than the hole for easy assembly. When struck, the core spread out creating a tight fit. There were early reports of the pieces separating but the Canadian mint claims it occurs only once every 60 million coins. Also, it is illegal in Canada to try to separate the pieces. In 2012 the alloy of both the outer ring and core were changed. The new outer ring is steel with multiply plated nickel. The core was changed to aluminum bronze with a plating of brass. The weight shrank to 6.92 grams and the thickness from 1.8 mm to 1.75 mm.
The Canadian mint claims the now composition has a magnetic signature that is difficult to copy. The obverse features the current effigy of Queen Elizabeth II created by Susanna Blunt. On the outer ring are the words Elizabeth II, the date and D. G. Regina. At the bottom of the ring is the mint logo. The toonie is the only Canadian coin to
consistently show the date on the obverse.
The reverse of most circulation strikes shows a polar bear standing on Ice. Brent Townsend is the artist who created this design. In the ring is written Canada and 2Dollars. After the 2012 alloy change the wording was altered. At the top of the

ring is a lenticular showing two maple leaves. The words were repositioned lower and two circles with maple leaves flank the number 2. There are many ways to collect this coin. Basic circulation strikes are very inexpensive. With the favorable exchange rate with the US dollar, some can be bought for under $2. Nicer specimens may cost a bit more. The next level are specimen and proof coins. Many of these coins run in the $10 to $20 range. Because the Canadian mint never met a commemorative, they didn't like there are many special issues. Some are in the standard alloy while others are struck in various combinations of silver and gold. The most expensive ones have a ring of solid silver and a core of solid gold. These coins usually sell in the range of $500 to $600. Lastly, this year they even issued a coin showing the northern lights that glows in the dark.

1957 Silver Certificates

This month's currency of the month are the 1957 series of $1 silver certificates. There are three subsets of this series, 1957, 1957a and 1957 b. The 1957 series was created when President Eisenhower appointed Robert Anderson Secretary of the Treasury and his signature was paired with then treasurer Ivy Baker Priest. Between 1957 and 1961 2.6 billion notes were printed along with 307.6-million-star notes.

In 1961, newly elected President John F. Kennedy appointed C. Douglas Dillon Secretary of the treasury and Elizabeth Rudel Smith as treasurer. The new signature combination became the 1957 a series. Using these signatures, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing made 1.594 billion regular and 94.7-million-star notes. Of note, Mrs. Smith appeared on the September 11, 1961, episode of To Tell The Truth. On that episode three panelists failed to identify her.

In 1963, Kathryn O'hay Granahan became treasurer bringing about the 1957 b

series. In less than a year before the last delivery on November 6, 718.4 million regular and 49.3-million-star notes were printed. These notes are easy to spot because both the seal and serial numbers are blue. Above the portrait is silver certificate and below is one dollar in silver payable to the bearer on demand. Otherwise, the bill is like bills printed today.

When the price of silver began to rise, dealers started buying all the silver certificates they could get their hands on. One dealer had so many bills, he had to buy a plane to transport them. The notes were then taken to treasury offices where they were exchanged for Morgan and peace dollars. When the silver dollars ran out, the treasury used minor silver coins. This lasted till the coin shortage started. Then the treasury switched to giving out packets containing .77 ounce of silver granules. If the transaction was large enough, silver bars were substituted.

On July 24, 1968, the treasury ceased redeeming notes for silver. At that time people holding these bills hoping to make a quick profit were stuck with bills only worth face value. Even today, a silver certificate will show up in circulation. Despite all the redemptions, the notes are still common. Nice, circulated notes may sell for $3-4 and crisp uncirculated notes usually fall in the $15-25 range. Star notes are worth only a little more.

1849 $20 Gold

This month's coin of the month is the 1849 $20 gold piece or Double Eagle. Legislation authorizing this coin along with the $1 gold coin was signed on March 3, 1849, on President James K. Polk's last day in office. The main reason for this new denomination was to better use the surplus gold bullion coming in from California. This also made payments between banks and foreign Governments easier.

On December 22, 1849, one or more pieces were struck. There is some debate as to the exact number struck. Walter Breen contends there were two made that

day. One eventually ending up in the Smithsonian and the other was gifted to Treasury Secretary William Meredith. Other numismatic scholars such as Dave Bowers maintain only one specimen was struck. In addition to the gold piece, there was one struck in bronze and later gold plated. Both are considered pattern coins not intended for circulation. The Judd catalog of patterns list the gold version as J-117 and the brass as J-118. An alternate listing of patterns compiled by Pollock classify the coins as P-132 and P-133. Today, only the Smithsonian example remains. The gilt brass piece sold in an1892 auction for $55. The whereabouts of this coin is presently unknown.

James B. Longacre created both the obverse and reverse designs. The obverse shows the left profile of Liberty wearing a coronet proclaiming liberty. Circling above the portrait are 13 stars with the date appearing below. The reverse features a heraldic eagle and shield. In the eagle's claws are arrows and an olive branch. Held in its beak is a ribbon on which E Pluribus Unum is written. Between the eagle's wings are rays and 13 stars in an oval. Circling above the eagle is United States of America and below is Twenty D.

Physically, the coin is 33 mm and weighs 33.44 grams of 0.900 gold and 0.100 copper with traces of silver. Actual gold weight works out to 0.96 troy ounces.

As part of the national numismatic collection, the coin makes occasional appearances at major conventions. In their price guide, PCGS gives this coin an unofficial grade of Proof 64. Although the coin will never be sold, PCGS values the coin at $20 million. The only way you or I can possess this coin is to buy a replica. A nice copy usually sells for $15 to $20.

Guns on coins

This month's coins of the month are the two dozen US coins using guns as a design element. The most common depiction of a firearm is a rifle, but a pistol and a cannon are also used. Five State/America the Beautiful quarters qualify for this article. In 1999, the New Jersey quarter depicts Washington crossing the

Delaware River. In the boat a few soldiers are seen holding rifles. The Massachusetts quarter the following year shows the statue of a minuteman holding his rifle. In 2011, the Gettysburg quarter depicts a civil war soldier swinging his rifle equipped with a bayonet. The Cumberland Gap quarter shows a settler cradling his rifle on a hunt for something to eat. Lastly, the George Rogers Clark quarter shows a group of soldiers springing into action.

In the classic silver commemorative series, there are also five coins incorporating rifles in their designs. Frontiersmen are shown holding rifles on the 1921 Missouri, 1925 Fort Vancouver, 1934-38 Boone and our own 1936 Elgin. The lone exception is the 1925 Lexington-Concord. This coin depicts the same minuteman statue as seen on the Massachusetts state quarter.

The last group discussed here is the modern commemorative series. Most coins of this era depict soldiers in action. These coins include the 1991 Korean War silver dollar, the 50th anniversary of WWII half, dollar, and $5 gold, The 1998 Black Revolutionary war patriots, The 2011 US Army half, $5 gold, and the 2012 Infantry soldier on both the obverse and reverse. The Lewis and Clark bicentennial dollar shows an explorer with his rifle. In 2002, The West Point dollar depicts cadets in a color guard presenting their rifles. The 2015 US Marshals service half depicts an officer carrying a rifle while on the dollar the marshal is only armed with a pistol. This year the Mint is remembering the end of WWI with a silver dollar showing a Doughboy with his rifle at the ready. The largest caliber weapon on a US coin is the cannon on the reverse of the 1995 Civil War battlefields half.

Assembling this set would be a moderate challenge for an intermediate collector. Nice uncirculated State/ATB quarters would cost about a dollar or two. Silver proofs of the same usually run $5-$10. In the classic commemorative series prices in MS63 range from about $100 for the Lexington-Concord to over $900 for the Missouri 2*4. Values for the modern commemoratives generally range from $20-$30 for the half dollars to $35-$90 for the silver dollars. The gold coins are worth about $400 each but the value may vary depending on the current spot price of gold.

Liberty or V nickels

This month's coin of the month is the Liberty or V nickel of 1883-1913. In the song "put another nickel in, in the nickelodeon," this is the coin they are singing about. The nickelodeon being a popular coin operated device of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The coin is interesting because of the controversies that occurred during the coins first and last year.

In 1883, just after the coin first appeared, people noticed the denomination was not spelled out. That and the coins similar size to the $5 gold coin inspired criminals to gold plate the coin and attempt to pass it off as a higher denomination. To further deceive, the crooks also tried to create a reeded edge. Some coins were well crafted while others were quite cruds. This begat the story of Josh Tatum, a deaf-mute who was tried for attempted fraud. Tatum was eventually acquitted because the prosecution could not prove he claimed the coin was gold and just took whatever change the clerk gave him. Soon after the reverse design was altered to include the word cents.

The next 30 years were mostly uneventful with annual mintages in the 20-40 million range. There were a few notable low mintage years such as 1885, 1886 and 1894. In December 1912 as the mint wrapped up the years production, Mint Director Roberts issued an order stating, "Do nothing about 5 cent coinages for 1913 till the new designs are ready." However, one or more mint employee on the request of Samuel Brown produced 5 1913 dated coins. Brown then sat on the coins for almost seven years even offering to pay $500 for one knowing he had all five. Brown finally exhibited the coins at the 1920 ANA convention. For the next 20 years the coins traded as a complete set and was owned by both Wayte Raymond and Col. E. H. R. Green.

In 1942 the set was broken up and the pedigree of each coin is well documented. One coin ended up in the collection of King Farouk, another was a plot device on the TV show Hawaii 5-0, and another was thought missing for 40 years. The missing coin was eventually found in a closet after it was misclassified as counterfeit. At the 2003 ANA convention the coin was reexamined and found to be genuine.

Today three coins are in private collections and the other two are in the Smithsonian and ANA museum.

Charles Barber created this coin's design. The obverse portrait of Liberty was influenced by Morgan's dollar and Swiss-Greek-Roman coins. Liberty wears a coronet inscribed with Liberty and the portrait is surrounded by 13 stars and the date. The reverse, as previously noted, changed in the first year. Type 1 coins

feature a large V in the center surrounded by a wreath of wheat, corn, and cotton. Around this are the words United States of America and E Pluribus Unum separated by two dots. When the design was changed to type 2, E Pluribus Unum was moved to just above the wreath and cents was placed in the newly vacated spot. In 1912, branch mints struck nickels for the first time. The mint mark appears near the left dot on the reverse.

Specifications are 21.2 mm and weighs 5 grams of 75% copper and 25% nickel. Assembling a set is a challenge for intermediate to advanced collectors. Most coins are either AG/Good or Mint State. Some mid-grade coins such as XF/AU can be scarce. A set of coins in good will cost about $1,000, an XF set runs about $4,500, a MS60 set goes for $7,200 and a MS 65 will set you back $50,000. Of course, these prices do not include the 1913. To add this coin will cost between $3 and $5 million if one ever appears on the market.

1921 Half Dollars

This month's coins of the month are the Walking Liberty half dollars struck in 1921. The coins were struck at all three mints, Philadelphia, Denver and San Francisco In extremely limited quantities. One reason for the low mintages may be all three mints were spending most of their time and resources striking Morgan and Peace dollars in compliance with the Pittman act.

That year the mint struck a total of 86,720,000 Morgan dollars and 1,006,473 Peace dollars. This theory is supported by the fact that both the dimes and quarters also had much lower mintages that year. Another factor that may have contributed to the low mintages is the mint also struck five commemorative half dollars that year. These were the 1921 Pilgrim, Missouri, Missouri 2*4, Alabama, and Alabama 2*2.

The following is a brief examination of the Walking Liberty halves of 1921.

1921 Philadelphia. This issue has a mintage of 246,000. Mint state specimens are usually well struck and has an estimated population of 85-95 in MS65 or better with the finest known grading MS66. Values for this coin are $150 good,

$2,200 XF, $6,250 MS60 and $23,500 MS65. 1921 Denver. This coin has the lowest mintage of the Walking Liberty series at 208,000. The overall strike in this coin is particularly good for the series. A mint employee at the time once stated that two sets of dies were used producing 257,672 pieces. This means over 49,000 were not included in the official mintage and most likely melted at the mint. There are an estimated 50-60 pieces still extant in MS65 or better condition. Values for this coin are $270 good, $2,850 XF, $9,250 MS60 and $42,500 MS65.

1921 San Francisco. This is both the most common and the rarest of the three depending on your point of view. The way it is most common is its mintage of 548,000. The way it is the rarest is in grades over VF. So much so, the coin is considered a condition rarity. Strike on this coin is fair, not as good as the other two but better than strikes from this mint from the 1940's. Estimates are 20 or so still exist in grades of MS65 or better. Walter Breen speculated most if not all gem coins came from a single roll. Values for this coin are 54 good, $3,750 XF, $18,000 MS60 and $110,000 MS65.

Proof Mercury Dimes 1936 – 1942

This month's coins of the month are the Proof Winged Liberty or Mercury dimes issued 1936 to 1942. When the mint resumed production of proof coins near the end of the great depression, the coins were sold individually. So, if a collector only wanted proof Mercury dimes, they could buy as many as they wanted at 20 cents each. Also, if a collector wanted a complete year set, the total cost was $1.89. This accounts for the different mintages for each denomination. Low denomination coins sold the most while half dollars sold the least.

Adolph A. Weinman's is one of the most popular issued by the mint. The obverse showing Liberty wearing a winged cap is female but is confused with mercury, a male whose wings are on his ankles. The reverse design of a faces comes from ancient Roman times. The coin is struck in 90% silver and contains .072 troy ounce.

Here I will examine the seven issues by year. Values given will be for PR63, PR65, and PR67 and when applicable cameo proof 63 and 65. To date neither PCGS nor NGC has certified a proof mercury dime as deep or ultra-cameo.

1936 This has the lowest mintage at 4,130. Tiny by today's standards but large when compared to pre-WWI issues. Almost all known pieces are brilliant proofs but Breen claims there could be as many as 8 satin proofs. Both PCGS and NGC population reports show no certified cameo proofs for this date. Values are listed at $775, $950, and $2,500.

1937 Mintages increased slightly to 5,756. Both PCGS and NGC have certified a single cameo contrast coin. Values for this year are $390, $525, $850 with the cameos worth $1,200 and $1500.

1938 Although the mintage increased to 8,738 there are no known cameo coins. Perhaps there may be some buried deep in someone's collection waiting to be certified? Values for this issue are $235, $385, and $650.

1939 The mintage rose to 9,321 and is the easiest to find with nice cameos. The PCGS population is 100 and NGC 45. Of course, this may include the same coin being re-submitted trying to get an upgrade to a higher grade or deep cameo. Values this year are $210, $260, $400 with the cameos $1200 and $1500.

1940 The mintage surpasses five digits at 11,827. Even with the larger mintage there are only two certified cameo coins (both by NGC). The values come in at $160, $200, $325, and $400 and $2,000 for the cameos.

1941 Although the mint struck 16,557 pieces only a single cameo coin exists in a NGC holder. Values are $150, $185, $325, and $5,750 for this single cameo proof.

1942 The last year of proof Mercury dimes had a mintage of 22,379. Quality also improved as PCGS certified 50 cameo proofs and NGC 11. Values for the final issue are $150, $185, $325 with the cameos coming in at $1200 and $1500.

On the PCGS website there are 40 complete registry sets of proof Mercury dimes. The finest known has an average grade of PR68 and is worth $42,000.

1924 Jack Dempsey medal

This month's medal of the month was issued in 1924 to promote Universal Studios "Fight and win series" starring Jack Dempsey. At the time of filming, Dempsey was the reigning Heavyweight Boxing champ having won the belt in 1919.

The Fight and win series consist of 10 short films each running 20 mins. Also known as one-reelers. Since this was a 1924 release all episodes are black and white and silent. The only sound was background music and viewers had to read title cards to keep up with the story.

The first episode premiered on June 23, 1924 and was titled "Winning his way." Subsequent episodes appeared every two weeks with the final episode playing on October 27th.

Like most serials, each episode ended with unanswered questions to encourage viewers to see the next chapter. Episodes 2 thru 9 started with a recap, settled previous questions, and advanced the plot to the next cliffhanger. The final episode tied up all loose ends in a happy ending.

According to Martin Scorsese, about 90% of all films made before 1930 are lost forever. The main reason is the nitrate stock used for movies. Nitrate film is highly unstable and over time disintegrates much like the current zinc cents. That and the fact this was a minor release probably means this film is also lost forever. Someday a print hidden in a vault somewhere may emerge but is unlikely.

The actual medal was issued with three finishes each with the same design. One had a gold finish, the other silver and a third bronze. The dimensions are 35 mm and weighs 13 grams.

The obverse (heads) design has a portrait of Dempsey inside a horseshoe that has boxing gloves on the ends. Circling the images are Jack Dempsey lucky piece and Fight and Win. The reverse is all text. The inscriptions are See Jack Dempsey/in/Universal's/Sensational/"Fight and Win"/pictures. In tiny letters at the bottom is the maker Greensduck Co., Chi. meaning this is a locally made medal.

This medal appeals to three types of collectors. First are exonumia collectors, second is boxing collectors especially those who collect Jack Dempsey items.

Lastly this medal appeals to film collectors.

Since there is no price guide for items such as this the best source of value is eBay. Looking at sold prices, one very worn example sold for $2.92. Two nicer examples sold for $13.50 and $17.99. One seller has a buy it now price of $119.99 but I doubt he will get it. The piece I have is in vf/xf condition with a hole in it. The medal was probably carried on a keychain.

1854-S $5 Liberty

This month's coin of the month is the newly discovered 1854-S $5 Gold Liberty. For over a century the commonly held belief was only three examples existed. All three have well documented pedigrees being owned by some of the most famous collectors including Col. E. H. R. Green and Louis Eliasberg. Of these three examples, one is currently in the Smithsonian, and another is in a private collection in Texas. The third specimen was in a collection in Florida but was stolen in 1967 and has not been seen since.

A collector in New England purchased what he thought was a counter-feit 1854-S some time ago. Earlier this year, he took a gamble and sent the coin to NGC to be authenticated. Much to his good fortune, the coin was found to be genuine. At first, it was thought the coin was the one stolen in 1967. That coin was last sold at a Stacks auction in 1962. A comparison of that coin and this one confirmed they are different making this the fourth example known.

It is hard not to make comparisons with this coin and the Walton 1913 Liberty nickel re-discovered in 2003. Like the nickel, both coins were thought to be lost for many years. Both coins were thought to be fake and when authenticated, both coins caused great excitement in the numismatic community. Lastly, when placed up for auction, both coins had sales estimated well into seven figures.

Let us look at the origin of this great rarity. 1854 was the first year of the San Francisco mint and according to Breen, the lack of certain reefing chemicals led to limits in gold coin production. The mint, bowing to public demand,

concentrated its efforts on striking $10 and $20 coins. Those issues have mintages of 123,826 and 141,468, respectively. The mintages of the $2.50 and $5 were only 246 and 268. One theory is the smaller denominations were struck only as presentation pieces of souvenirs. No one knows what happened to the other 264 $5's minted. Perhaps some were never issued and melted at the mint? Normal wear and tear from circulation could account for the loss of some pieces. Another theory is most were sent to England and melted and struck as sovereigns.

NGC graded discovery coin XF 45, and the owner cosigned the coin to the ANA convention auction run by Heritage Auctions. On August 16, 2018, the coin sold for a final bid of $1,800,000 increasing to$2,160,000 after the buyer's fee.

CAMS and WAMS

This month's coins of the month are a group of Lincoln cent varieties known as CAMS and WAMS. This refers to the gap between the A and M in America on the reverse of the cent. CAM stands for close A-M and WAM is for wide A-M. From 1959 to 1992 all Lincoln cent reverses were wide A-M varieties. The same design was used for both business and proof strikes.

In 1992 the Mint redesigned the reverse closing the gap between the A-M for use starting in 1993. In typical Mint fashion, some coins with a close A-M reverse were struck in both Philadelphia and Denver. In 1993, all business and proof coins featured the close A-M reverse. The next year, 1994, the Mint decided to revert to the wide A-M reverse for business strikes and to continue using the close A-M reverse for proofs.

Things went fine until 1998 when Mint employees mistakenly used a business strike die on proof coins and a proof die for business strike coins. The mistakes

were repeated in 1999 and in 2000 only business strike coins were affected. Since the dies were made in Philadelphia, it's easy to see how these mistakes were made. While the gap between the letters is the easiest diagnostic, the designer initials are a better indicator. On close A-M coins, the initials are far away from the memorial. On wide A-M coins the initials are closer, and the G is better defined. The following is an examination of all seven known CAM-WAM varieties.

1992 Philadelphia. The variety of this date is the close A-M and is a very rare coin. PCGS claims that only five examples are currently known to exist. A mint state example is worth $5,000 and up and a MS67 example sold for a record price of $24,000.

1992 Denver. The close A-M variety is the only one from this mint. The coin is almost as rare as the Philadelphia issue with about 15 known to exist. Values for this coin can range from about $2,000 for an AU example to over $12,000 for one in MS65.

1998 Philadelphia. The desired coin from this Mint is the wide A-M. Compared to the other issues, this is the second most common. Even today, they are occasionally found in circulation. The Red Book lists values for this coin at $15 in MS63 and $25 in MS65.

1998 San Francisco. The scarce variety here is the close A-M. So far, the grading services have certified less than 100 examples. Values here are $150 for a PF66 Deep Cameo and $400 for a PF69 Deep Cameo. 1999 Philadelphia. The wide A-M this year is the rarest of the 1998-2000 era. There are perhaps a few hundred extant. In the Red Book this coin is given a value of $500 in MS65.

1999 San Francisco. The close A-M variety is more common than the previous year with certified specimens numbering in the thousands. A proof 66 Deep Cameo is worth $90 while a proof 69 Deep Cameo goes for $215.

2000 Philadelphia. This list concludes with the most common A-M variety. This is perhaps the easiest to find and is reflected in it's values. A MS63 is worth about $10 and a MS65 $20.

There are rumors of a possible 1996 Philadelphia strike with a wide A-M. The owner of the coin claims it was stolen before it could be certified.

There may still be many more out there waiting to be found, so keep checking your change.

British Alphabet 10 pence

This month's coins of the month are the 2019 British 10 pence alphabet series. It appears this series was inspired by the American State/ Territory/Parks quarters and various Canadian 25 cent commemoratives.

There are, of course, 26 coins in the British alphabet series. Each coin depicts an aspect of British life and mythology associated with the letters A to Z, sorry, Zed.

The British mint calls this promotion, "The Great British Coin Hunt." The main goal is to encourage the public to take up collecting much like the numerous 50 pence commemoratives.

The common obverse features the fifth effigy of Queen Elizabeth. Circling the portrait is Ten Pence, 2018, Elizabeth II, Dei Gra Reg F D. The last part translates to Queen by the grace of God and defender of the faith. The physical specifications of the circulating coins are 24.5mm, 6.5 grams, composed of nickel-plated steel. This is slightly larger than a US quarter. And has an exchange rate of 13 cents.

The announced mintage for all coins is 2.6 million or 100,000 per letter. Most of the coins will be distributed through the post offices. The Royal mint will also sell singles at £2 ($2.60) per letter or £52 ($67.60) for a complete set. The mint also offers a four-page custom album for £9.90 ($12.87).

For the high-end collector, there is also an option to purchase silver proof versions of the coins. Each silver coin weighs 6.5 grams of .925 silver. The actual silver weight comes out to .1933 troy oz. worth about $2.80. However, the British mint sells the coins for £35 ($45.50) each and the set for £910 ($1,183). A genuinely nice wood cabinet for the proof coins will set you back £45 ($58.50).

Each letter and subject are listed below. To view the other coins, go to

royalmint.com

A-Angel of the North	B-James Bond
C-Cricket	D-Double Decker Bus
E-English Breakfast	F-Fish and Chips
G-Greenwich Mean time	H-Houses of Parliament
I-Ice Cream cones	J-Jubilee
K-King Arthur	L-Loch ness
M-Mackintosh	N-National health
O-Oak Trees	P-Post Boxes
Q-Queuing	R-Robin
S-Stonehenge	T-Teapots
U-Union Flag	V-Villages
W-World Wide Web	X-X marks the spot
Y-Yeoman	Z-Zebra crossing

(ELGIN)

Shield Nickels

This month's coin of the month is the Shield nickels of 1866-1883. To rebuild the supply of circulating coinage after the Civil War, Congress authorized the use of nickel in both the 3 and 5 cent coins. After some experimentation an alloy of 25% nickel and 75% copper was chosen. In the case of the 5-cent coin the diameter is 20.6mm and weighs 5 grams. James Longacre submitted several designs with the Shield design being chosen. This is the fourth US coin not to feature a portrait of Liberty after the three-cent silver, flying eagle cent and two cent pieces.

The obverse features a large heraldic shield, hence the coins name, with a gothic style cross on the top. On each side of the shield are olive branches. Written above is In God we trust, and the date appears just below. A contemporary critic of the coin described it as a tombstone draped by a weeping willow. The reverse features a large 5 surrounded by 13 stars with 3 short rays filling the gaps between the stars. Above is United States of America and below are cents

separated by dots. Some critics complained the design was a nod to the Confederacy referring to the stars and rays as stars and bars, a term for the Confederate flag.

As the minting process proceeded the mint discovered the design led to rapid die wear with die cracks the most common result. In 1867 the reverse was modified by removing the rays between the stars. In addition to the afore mentioned cracks, the series is replete with numerous double dies, repunched dates and overdates. One notable repunched date appears to be 1866/6.

The basic set consists of 19 mint state and 21 proofs for a total of 40 coins. If you add all the varieties listed in Breen's book, the set expands to 70 coins.

Collecting the complete series requires deep pockets. Single type coins are affordable with a coin with rays going for about $30 in good climbing to $300 in mint state 60 to $3000 in mint state 66. The no rays version starts at $20 rising to $170 and finally $850 in the same grades as the previous coin. Values for proof coins vary wildly. The common dates can be had for between $200 and $500 in grades proof 60 to 65. The 1867 with rays is a very rare coin valued between $15,000 and $40,000 in proof 60 to 65. There is little price difference for cameo and ultra-cameo compared to brilliant proofs. The business strikes of 1879 to 1881 are very scarce and are harder to find than the proofs of those years. A complete set of mint state 60 coins will run about $10,000 and up while a similar set of proof coins are worth well over $31,000.

1968 to 1974-S Lincoln Cents

This month's coins of the month are the circulation issues from the San Francisco mint 1968 to 1974. 1968 marked the return of mintmarks to coins since their use was suspended with the 1965 issue and the first circulating S mint coin since 1955. That year the San Francisco mint also struck nickels for

circulation eventually ceasing production in 1970. The seven cents in this series, eight if you count both 1970 varieties, can still be found in circulation despite having much smaller mintages than the Philadelphia and Denver issues. The following is a year-by-year breakdown of each issue.

1968 mintage 258.27 million. The coins from this year are the last to be made from the 60-year-old master hub and its age showed. There are a few minor double die varieties to look for. A nice uncirculated coin costs under $1 and certified MS67 coins can fetch $250 or more.

1969 mintage 544.38 million. The mint gave this issue the first of a series of facelifts. The revamped portrait was a vast improvement over the previous issue. Also, notable this year is one of the most desirable error coins in the Lincoln cent series, the double die. Originally considered counterfeit, they were seized by the FBI. When the mint acknowledged the coins were real, they were returned. Today those coins if graded mint state can bring between $50,000 and $100,000. Non-double die coins are much more affordable with prices ranging between $1 for uncirculated coins up to $500 for MS67 certified.

1970 mintage 690.56 million. The key varieties from this year are the large and small dates. While not as valuable as the 1969 double die, they are still very desirable. The keys to spotting the rarer small date is the height of the 7 in the date, the loop inside the 9 and the strength of the word liberty. The common large date values range from $1 uncirculated up to $300 certified MS67. The small date in similar grades can bring between $25 and $800.

1971 mintage 525.13 million, 1972 mintage 376.9 million and 1973 mintage 317.18 million. There are no real rarities from any of these three years. All are readily available for $1 uncirculated up to $300 MS67 for the 1971 and 1972, the 1973 is rarer and can bring up to $1500 also MS 67.

1974 mintage 409.43 million. This issue ends the circulation S mint memorials. It also has one of the least interesting varieties of the Lincoln cent series. Mid-year the mint slightly altered the date creating a large and small date variety. Unfortunately, the change is so subtle and quantities so similar there is no difference in value. Today it is a mostly ignored variety. Like the other coins in this subset, uncirculated coins are worth $1 and MS67 certified coins can sell for as much as $3000.

Series of 1899 $5 Silver Certificates

This month's currency of the month is the 1899 $5 Silver Certificate sometimes referred to as the Chief note. This refers to the portrait of Thatkoka Inyanke or Running Antelope. Many mistakenly refer to him as Chief Onepapa. Onepapa or Hunkpapa is a tribe in the Sioux nation. Born in 1821, Running Antelope became Chief in 1851 and is best known as a skilled orator and advisor to Sitting Bull. He passed away in 1896. Later research discovered the feathered headdress worn is not Sioux but a Pawnee design. The smaller headdress was a better fit given the space available for the portrait.

This note succeeded the popular but controversial educational series $5 note. Like its's predecessor, it is a large size format bill measuring 7.42 by 3.13 inches.

G. F. C. Smillie engraved the plates featuring the portrait of the Chief along with inscriptions in several different fonts. Written on the obverse is "This certifies there have been deposited in the Treasury of the United States of America five silver dollars payable to the bearer on demand Washington, D. C." Other inscriptions include silver certificate (3 times), five (6 times), V (4 times) and 5 (8 times). Also, on the obverse is a conjoined five over V, the Treasury seal and the serial number twice all printed in blue ink. Starting in 1898 the serial number began with a symbol resembling two triangles and a dash and ended with the same symbol. When the serial number reached its limit the first symbol was changed to a letter and the letter changed as needed till the end of production in the 1920's. One oddity of the serial number is there are no leading zeros. For example, serial number (letter) 1 (symbol), 50 is shown as (letter) 50 (symbol) and so on up to a maximum of eight digits. Star notes first appeared in 1909 with the star replacing the first letter.

The reverse is less artistic than the obverse and consists entirely of text is a large V. Around the V is the legal disclaimer "This certificate is receivable for customs, taxes and all public dues and when so received may be reissued." Other inscriptions are United States of America, silver certificate (3 times), five dollars, 5 and five (twice each) and V (5 times). There is also a variation of the reverse concerning the placement of the plate numbers. On the type 1 reverse,

the plate number is in the upper right corner near the 5. On type two the plate number is in the upper left corner near the 5.

In the 20+ years the note was issued, over 566 million notes were printed. Today the estimated population is between 5,250 and 6,750 notes. Of this number, there is an estimated population of about 110 star notes. The series also features eleven different signature combinations. The signatures are of the Register of the Treasury and the Treasurer. The possible combinations are as follows.

Lyons – Roberts	Napier – Mc Clung	Elliott – Burke
Lyons – Treat	Napier – Thompson	Elliott – White
Vernon – Treat	Parker – Burke	Speelman - White
Vernon – Mc Clung	Teehee – Burke	

If you include star notes and mules a complete set consists of 20 notes. To assemble a complete set, you will need a big bankroll. Common circulated notes start at $400 and up with uncirculated notes selling in the $1000 to $10,000 range with the highest values going to the star notes.

Newman Numismatic Portal

This month's coin website of the month is the Newman Numismatic Portal. This is the legacy of famed collector and researcher Eric P. Newman. Among his honors, Newman was awarded the ANA medal of merit in 1964, the Farran Zerbe award in 1969, election to the ANA hall of Fame in 1993 along with many Numismatic literary guild awards. In the early 2000's he donated 2 million to Washington University in St. Louis to establish a museum and this web site. The web address is nnp.wustl.edu.

In this website there is a massive amount of literature, images, and videos. The logo for the site utilizes the eye of providence as taken from the Great Seal of the United States. The following is a breakdown of the various categories that can be explored as of 3/21/2019.

Photos. There are 422 assorted sets. Some sets explore just one series, such as Half Cents while other sets show entire collections. Here you will find photos of some of the finest coins known.

Books. There are 506 complete coin books that can be read kindle style. The books are cataloged by either author or title.

Periodicals. There are hundreds of club periodicals and dealer price lists. The club periodicals are sorted by year and month.

People. In this section there are 2,878 mini biographies of noted collectors, writers, artists, and others closely associated with numismatics.

Auction companies. There are 243 auction companies represented. Some catalogs date back to the 1880's. Some catalogs have handwritten prices realized but most do not. Still the images and descriptions are amazing.'

Multimedia. This is my favorite section of the site. There are thousands of videos posted. Some are short subjects while others are up to an hour long. In the David Lisot section, there are over 1,800 titles. Many of the recent videos are recordings of lectures given at the major conventions. If you attended one of these presentations, you may see yourself in the audience or someone you know.

Lastly there is a built-in search engine. Searching for the Elgin Coin Club a total of 691 hits are found. Most of the mentions are either meeting times or location of upcoming coin shows. Occasionally there is a mention of club activities of member news.

If you have the notion, give the site a try.

Mercury Dime Short Set

This month's coins of the month are the last five years of the Winged Liberty of Mercury dimes issued 1941 – 1945. Also known as a short set, these are easy for novice collectors to obtain and challenging enough for the most experienced numismatists. This set is so popular, Capital Plastics and several other suppliers have developed special holders just for this set. In each of the five years of this set, all three mints struck coins for circulation. A breakdown of each year is a s follows.

In 1941, the Philadelphia mint struck 175 million coins, Denver 45.6 million and San Francisco 43 million. In this year, as with most years in this set there are variations in the S mintmark. There are both large and small S's but there is little difference in value.

In 1942, mintages were 205.4 million from Philadelphia, 60.7 million from Denver and 49.3 million from San Francisco. The big news from this year is the overdates on both Philadelphia and Denver issues. The Philadelphia issue is easy to spot by the naked eye while the Denver version needs some magnification to detect. Both are very scarce and given the number of fakes out there, authentication is mandatory.

In 1943, the Philadelphia mintages were 191.7 million, Denver 71.9 million and San Francisco 60.4 million. There are no notable varieties from this year.

During 1944, Philadelphia coined 231.4 million, Denver made 62.2 million and San Francisco 49.5 million. As with the previous year, there are no special varieties.

Due to the death of President Roosevelt in 1945 and plans to issue a new dime, this was the last year of this design. The mintages this year were Philadelphia 159 million, Denver 40 million and San Francisco 41.9 million. Connoisseurs of full split bands consider the Philadelphia issue from this year to be one of the

toughest to obtain. Top grade coins with full split bands can bring tens of thousands of dollars. The finest known has sold for over $90,000.

The basic set consists of 15 coins, 17 if you include the overdates. A circulated set is easy to assemble, and one can be acquired for under $35. Nicer circulated sets may cost a little more. Most certified coins will bring between $15 and $75 each depending on Year, mintmark and grade. The exception is the 1945-P. As for the overdates, circulated coins start at about $400 rising to about $4,000 for low mint state coins. Gem certified coins graded MS65-66 go for between $10,000 and $15,000. Full split band overdates are quite scarce and are worth between $8,000 and $50,000 in MS63 to MS65.

Members Request

The information about the two items in this month's column was requested by Don C. who supplied the items. After a bit of research, I was able to discover some interesting facts about both items.

The first item is an 1871 Brazilian 200 reis coin issued during the reign of Pedro II (1831-1891) also known as Pedro the Magnanimous. The obverse shows a crowned coat of arms within a laurel wreath. Above is the countries name in Portuguese Imperio Do Brazil, or Empire of Brazil. Below is the date, 1871. The Empire of Brazil was established in 1822 and dissolved in 1889 with the overthrow of the emperor.

The reverse has 200 reis in a circle. Encircling the denomination is Decreto No. 1817 De 3 De Setembro De 1870. The legend translates to Decree of September 3, 1870. The decree calls for the striking of 50, 100 and 200 reis coins in copper-nickel. The coin specifications are 32 mm, 14.1 grams of 75% copper and 25% nickel. The mintage for this issue was 3,650,000 pieces. When the coin was issued it had an exchange rate of about 10 cents. The Krause catalog lists this coin as KM478, and values range from 60 cents in fine to $60 for a mint state example.

The second item is an elongated cent issued at the Golden Gate International Exposition. Held near San Francisco from 1939- 1940. The actual fair was held on Treasure Island, a man-made island located in San Francisco Bay. The Island is 400 acres in size and is accessible either by a bridge or ferry. The theme of the fair was Pageant in the Pacific with an emphasis of Pacific themed art and sculpture. The number of countries varied but there were 20-30 present at any given day.

The exposition was held in two sessions. The first ran from Feb. 18, 1934, to Oct. 29, 1939. The second season began on May 25, 1940 and ended Sept. 29, 1940. Admission to the fair was 50 cents for one day and a season pass cost $7.50.

At least three different designs of elongated cents were used. The example shown here, one dated 1939 and another dated 1940. The design on this example shows an aerial view of Treasure Island. Depicted on the Island is a representation of the 80 ft. tall Tower of the sun. The tower is topped by a statue depicting Pacifica, Goddess of the Pacific. Inscribed on the cent is S. F. Bay G. C. Internat. Exposition, Good Luck, Health and Wealth. This example is holed, perhaps to be placed on a charm bracelet or key chain.

All details of the underlying coin are missing. Most likely it is a Lincoln cent from the late ‘20’s to mid ‘30’s. I hope it wasn’t a 1931-S. This coin is worth between $1 and $3.

When you wish on a star note

This month’s currency of the month is replacement notes better known as star notes. The reason for such notes is in the printing process mistakes can occur. Mistakes may include ink stains, no ink, folded paper, paper flaws miss-printing and other errors. Workers inspect the sheets and destroy the bad ones. Federal

law states once a serial number is used, it cannot be used again. So, to keep the numbers straight, star notes are inserted to keep things in order. Star notes have been used for over a century, but for the sake of this article, I will keep the timeframe of the article to notes printed since 1981. Also, I will limit the article to $1 bills even though star notes are printed for each denomination. All information on production numbers and values come from mycurrencycollection.com and the Coin World paper money price guide.

Spotting a star mote is easy. A star will appear at the end of the serial number on the obverse. Since star notes are only intended to be used as space fillers, production numbers are much smaller than regular notes. While regular notes are printed in the hundreds of millions to billions, similar star notes will have printings of no more than 2 or 3 million.

Now, what about prices? For the most part, star notes are worth 1.5 to 3 times the value of a similar regular note in the same grade. There are of course exceptions to this rule. High grade certified notes can sell for much higher prices as can fancy serial numbers. Fancy serial numbers can include radar notes, repeaters, binary, trinary and ladders.

Most collectors group every star note from a single district as one printing. Obsessive collectors break the notes into specific print runs. According to mycurrencycollection.com, the five scarcest star notes since 1981 are as follows.

1. 2009 district B #3, 6400001 to 6432000 net 32000.
2. 2013 district L #1 1 to 80000 net 80000.
3. 2013 district F #4 9600001 to 9700000 net 100000.
4. 1981a district B #4 9600001 to 9728000 net 128000.
5. 1995 district F #3 9472001 to 9600000 net 128000.

In 1988, during the BEP’s experiment with web press notes, a total of 640,000 star notes were printed for district F.

Lastly, according to Coin World’s paper money price guide, these are the top 5 most valuable star notes since 1981.

1. 1988a web press note district F xf $500 unc $1750
2. 1981 district K xf $800 unc $1250
3. 1988 district F xf $800 unc $1250
4. 2009 district H xf $250 unc $600
5. 2003 district D xf $45 unc $125

1884 & 1885 Trade Dollars

This month's coins of the month are the 1884 and 1885 Trade Dollars. Apart from a few individuals, the existence of these two coins was unknown till 1908. Where did these coins come from? Thomas Idler, a Philadelphia coin dealer, arranged with his friend, Col. A. Loudon Snowden a deal to strike five 1885 Trade dollars. This was obviously a clandestine deal as this coin is not included in the annual mint report. This is not surprising as the mint has specially struck coins for collectors for decades. Idler also acquired 10 1884 Trade dollars from the mint. While the 1884 dollar doesn't appear in the mint report, it is possible they were included with the 1883 dollars struck late in the year.

In late 1907 to early 1908, Idler's son-in-law John Hasseltine, brokered six 1884 dollars to various dealers, selling the coins for prices ranging from $150 to $400. One dealer turned down the coin for $40 probably thinking it was counterfeit. It is possible the discovery and disposition of the 1884 and 1885 Trade dollars inspired Samuel Brown to attempt the same trick with the 1913 Liberty nickels. That is having a small number of coins secretly struck, holding them for several years, then springing them on an unsuspecting numismatic community.

Over the next few years, other specimens including the 1885's privately changed hands. The first public auction of an 1884 and 1885 dollar came in June 1913 at B. Max Mehl's sale. The 1885 sold for $1,140 and the 1884 fetched $765.00.

Physically, the coins are standard Proof Trade dollars. William Barber created the design depicting Liberty sitting on cotton bales next to some stalks of wheat. She is looking to the west (The Orient), holding an olive branch in one hand and a scroll saying Liberty in the other. Below is another scroll on which In God We Trust is written. Circling around are 13 stars and the date.

The reverse features an Eagle holding arrows in one claw and an olive branch in the other. Below the Eagle is 420 grains and .900 Fine. Circling around is United States of America and Trade Dollar. The coin is 38.1 mm weighing 27.2 grams of 90% silver and 10% copper.

One advantage of each coin's small mintage is each coin has a well-defined pedigree. Most examples, not in old time collections have been certified by one of the major grading services. Grades usually range from Proof 63 to 66. One exception is a harshly cleaned 1884. Several of the coins show moderate to heavy cameo contrast.

Averaging values published by Coin World, PCGS and NGC the values today for the 1884 range from $380,000 in Proof 63 to $1,300,000 in Proof 66. Similarly, the 1885 has a catalog value of $1,700,000 in Proof 63 to $4,500,000.

Gold anniversary tribute coins 2014-2016

This month's coins of the month are the Gold special issue coins of 2014 and 2016. Created to honor landmark anniversaries, the coins were both successful and controversial. This is not the first time the mint has honored a coin's anniversary. In 1959 the mint marked the cent's 50th by issuing the Memorial cent and in 1996 the mint celebrated the dimes 50th by striking a W mintmark coin for that year's mint sets.

In 2014, the half dollar turned 50. For that occasion, the mint struck a series of coins in silver and one in gold. The gold version was to have a limited mintage and would be released simultaneously at the ANA convention, the Philadelphia and Denver mints and Washington D.C. The coin was composed of ¾ ounce of .9999 gold and sold for $1,240 with a limit of one per customer live and 5 for online buyers. A maximum of 500 coins were available at the live locations per day. The online buyers had to wait some time for delivery.

Dealers eager to obtain large quantities quickly came up with a plan to hire shills to stand in line and purchase coins for them. Scores showed up at each location causing headaches for local security. At the ANA convention, the first

four sold by the mint as verified by receipts were purchased by a dealer for $20,000. That dealer had the coins certified and reportedly sold number one for $100,000.

While the crowds were generally well behaved there were exceptions. In Denver the mint made buyers wait across the street. Just before the gates opened, they made a mad dash trying to get in position. In the process some were injured. After a couple of days of this, the mint ceased onsite sales. As a volunteer at the ANA convention, I saw the events there firsthand and was relieved when the mint stopped the sales. When the program ended some months later, a total of 69,299 units were sold. Today both raw and certified pieces up to Proof 70 can be purchased below issue price somewhere in the $900 to $1200 range.

Much less controversial but still quite popular are the trio of 2016 100th anniversary gold coins. They are the silver coins that debuted in 1916, the Winged Liberty dime, Standing Liberty quarter and the Walking Liberty half. These coins are among the most attractive and popular coins of the 20th century. Released one at a time over several months, the mint tried to avoid the mistakes of the Kennedy coin.

The first coin released was the dime. Being a Gold coin, the specs are different. It is slightly smaller at 16.5 mm but heavier at 3.11 grams of .9999 gold with a net weight of .10 oz. The inscription 24k AU, 1/10 oz. was added to the reverse. Despite being a special issue and using a softer metal, the strikes are not sharp. Dime specialists seek out full split bands on the reverse, this coin has none. The final mintage is 124,885 and today usually sells for $200 to $250.

The second release was the quarter. The obverse features the type one design introduced in 1916. As with the dime, the dimensions are different. This coin is 22 mm, weighing 7.776 grams of .9999 gold leaving a net weight of .25 ounce. Additional inscriptions of 24K AU ¼ oz. were added to the obverse below the shield. With a final mintage of 91,752 the coin usually sells between $450 and $550.

The final coin released was the half. As with the other two, the coin is smaller and heavier. This time the specs are 27 mm, weighing 15.552 grams of .9999 Gold with a net weight of .50 ounce. This is unusual as the Kennedy Gold coin contained .75 ounce. The added inscription of 24K Au ½ oz. was added to the reverse just above Half Dollar. The coin usually retails for $850 to $1,000. All four coin in this article were struck at the West Point facility.

Coins of 1820

The subjects for this month's coins of the month are the coins struck at the Philadelphia mint in 1820. In that year the mint only struck five denominations, the large cent, 10 cents, 25 cents, 50 cents and five dollars. I will give a breakdown of each variety as listed in the standard Red Book.

The design of the large cent is commonly known as the matron head type. Included in a mintage of 4,407,550 are an overdate along with large and small date variations. The overdate is easily spotted as the 1 under the 2 is easily seen by the naked eye. The 2 is also the key diagnostic for the large and small dates. On the large date the upper curl of the 2 is plain and on the small date it is fancier. Robert Scott designed this coin which is 28.5 mm weighing 10.89 grams of copper. The common varieties are valued at $40-50 in fine up to over $2,500 in MS63. The small date is more valuable going for between $150 and $2,500 in similar grades.

Next is the capped bust dime. This coin boasts a mintage of 942,823. The listed varieties are a large 0 in the date and small 0. John Reich designed this coin which is 18.8 mm weighing 2.7 grams of .8924 silver and .1076 copper. Values for the two varieties are similar and range from $275 in fine to $3,250 in MS63 with the small 0 jumping to $10,000 in MS63.

The next coin is the capped bust quarter also designed by John Reich. Like the dime this coin also has large and small 0 varieties. This issue has a mintage of 127,444, measures 27 mm and weighs 6.74 grams of .8924 silver with the

balance copper. Again, the values for these coins are similar going from $300 in fine to $7,800 in MS63 with the large 0 jumping to $12,000 in MS63.
The third of the four John Reich designs from this year is the capped bust half dollar. Although there may be others, the Red Book lists six varieties of this date. The varieties are 1820/19, square or curly base 2, curly base 2 small date, square base knob 2 and no knob 2 and no serif "E's." Total mintage for all varieties is 751,122. The coin is 32.5 mm and weighs 13.48 grams of .8924 silver the rest copper. There is a close range of values for each variety except the no serifs. The common ones are worth about $200 in fine to about $7,500 to $10,000 in MS63. The no serifs list for between $1,500 in fine to over $26,000 in MS60.
Lastly, we come to the only gold coin on the list. The capped head $5 gold, designed by John Reich, boasts three varieties. They are the curved base 2 with either small or large letters and square base 2. The physical dimensions of the coin are 25 mm and weighs 8.75 grams of .9167 gold with the balance copper and silver. Values for this coin are $5,000 in fine to $27,000 in MS63. The small letter variety is much scarcer in high grades and worth up to $80,000 in MS63.

Barber Half Dollars

This month's coin of the month is the Liberty head or Barber Half Dollars issued from 1892 to 1915. In the late 1880's to early 1890's the mint was looking to replace the seated liberty designs. At first the mint solicited the top artists in the country to submit drawings and plaster molds for consideration. Some artists declined saying the funds offered by the mint was insufficient for the time and effort required. Other artists even stated they wished to be compensated for their time if their design was not selected. In response to these

demands, the mint opened the competition to anyone interested. Of all the designs submitted, only a couple were determined to be worth consideration. Charles Barber, sensing an opportunity, took over the design process and not only created this coin, but used similar designs for the dime and quarter.

The coin's design is very simple, almost bland compared to the coins that came before and after. The obverse features a portrait of liberty influenced by European designs. An examination of Swiss coins of the time shows similarities. Here Liberty is shown wearing a cap with a laurel wreath and a ribbon inscribed with Liberty. Around the portrait are six stars, in God we trust, seven more stars and the date.

The reverse however seems to draw inspiration from the Heraldic Eagle design of the early 1800's. Here the Eagle is shown wings spread behind a shield. The head of the eagle faces toward its dexter claw in which an olive branch resides. On the branch is thirteen leaves and berries. In the Eagles sinister claw are thirteen arrows. Held in its beak is a ribbon saying E Pluribus Unum. Above the eagle's head is an arrangement of thirteen five pointed stars. Encircling the center device are the words United States of America and Half Dollar separated by a pair of dots. The mintmark indicating the coins production in New Orleans, San Francisco or Denver appears just below the Eagle's tail feathers.

Physically, the coin measures 30.6 mm and weighs 12.50 grams of 90% silver and 10% copper with a reeded edge. Between 1892 and 1915, a grand total of 135,916,202 coins were struck. As a comparison, from 1942-1943 the mint struck 149.5 million halves. Also, from 1960 to 1963 the mint struck over 198 million Franklins and the mintage of the 1964 Philadelphia Kennedy half was over 156 million.

A basic set of Barber halves consists of 73 unique date and mintmarks. The set increases to 74 if the 1892-O micro O variety is included. This variety came about when a worker used a punch intended for a quarter die on a half dollar die. Other key dates include the 1893-S, 1897-O & S, 1913-P, 1914-P and 1915-P. A common type coin sells between $15-20 in good increasing to about $1,500 in MS65. The rare 1892-O micro O starts at about$4,000 in good and rises to $95,000 in ms65. In addition to the business strikes, Proof versions were also struck each year. For the most part, mintages of the Proof coins fall in the 600 to 900 range, some higher, some lower. Valued for a brilliant Proof are in the $1,000-2,000 range. Cameo and Deep Cameo proofs are available and are only worth 2 to 2 ½ times the cost of a brilliant proof.

Canadian cents 1937-1952

This month's coins of the month are the one cent coins of Canada issued 1937 to 1952. The obverse depicts King George VI of England. Albert Frederick Arthur George was born December 4, 1895, and became King on December 11, 1936, following the abdication of Edward VIII. In 1923 he married Lady Elizabeth Angela Marguerite Bowes-Lyon who bore him two daughters, Elizabeth, and Margaret. During WWII he remained in London and abided by the same rationing laws as the rest of the population. He passed away on February 6, 1952, from a combination of lung cancer and heart disease. His daughter, Elizabeth then became Queen and still reigns today. His struggle with a speech impediment was chronicled in the film The Kings Speech starring Colin Firth.

T. Humphrey Paget designed the obverse portrait which faces the viewers left. His brother, Edward VIII also wanted a left facing portrait breaking tradition, but no coins were officially issued. To restore the precedent of opposite facing monarchs, George's portrait also faces left. Circling the portrait is one of two inscriptions. From 1937 to 1947 the inscription was GEORGIVS VI D G REX ET IND IMP or George 6 by the grace of God, King and Emperor of India. In 1948 due to India's independence the ET IND IMP was removed.

Kruger Gray designed the reverse which depicts a pair of maple leafs. Above is 1 Cent and below is the date and Canada. In 1948, India's independence necessitated the creation of a variety of the 1947 cent. While waiting for new obverse dies to be created, leftover 1947 dies were altered by adding a small maple leaf near the 7. This is to tell which coins were struck in 1947 and 1948. There is also a sub variety of the 1947 cent with the 7 having either a pointed or blunt top. In 1948 and 1949 a different variety was created. On some coins the last A of Gratia either points directly to or between the edge denticles. Some

1948 coins have smaller denticles, creating yet another variety. The two rarest varieties in this series are the 1949 A to denticle and 1948 A to small denticle. Otherwise, all coins are very common and can even still be found in circulation. Physically, the coin is the same size as a US cent but with very minor variation in the bronze alloy.

Creating a complete set is an easy task, even for beginning collectors. A complete basic set consists of 17 coins including the maple leaf variety. A more complete set with all varieties brings the set up to 21 coins. A nice AU basic set can be assembled for about $25 or less. If all varieties are added the cost only rises to about $100. In the case of a mint state set, the cost of a basic MS63 set is around $375 and with all varieties it can cost near $900.

Bears on Coins

There is a common theme for this month's coin of the month, Bears. And I'm not talking about Walter Payton or Mike Ditka, but real Bears. The animal appears on three commemorative halves and two quarters.

The first coin is the California jubilee half of 1925. One side shows a prospector and on the other is a Grizzly Bear on the prowl. Jo Mora designed this coin that

honors the state's 75th anniversary. The coin was minted in San Francisco and has a final distribution of 86,594. Values for the coin range from $170 in AU to $425 in MS65.

The next coin is the California Pacific International Exposition or San Diego half dollar. This coin was struck in both 1935 and 1936. On this coin one side shows a pair of landmark buildings from the expo. The other side depicts Minerva seated holding a spear and a shield decorated with the head of Medusa and inscribed Eureka. To her right is a Bear gazing to his right. In the background is a prospector, a ship, and mountains. Robert Aiken designed this coin that has a final net mintage of 70,132 for the 1935-S and 30,092 for the 1936-D. Values are $85 AU to $125 MS65 for the 1935-S and $100 AU to $135 MS65 for the 1936-D.

The final half dollar is the 1936 San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. There is a dispute as to which side is the obverse. The Mint and the Red Book call the Bear side the obverse. That side has the inscriptions United States of America, In God We Trust, Liberty and Half Dollar. The first and last inscriptions usually appear on a coin's reverse while the other two usually appear on the obverse. The bridge side only lists the name of the bridge and the date, and the date usually appears on the obverse. Jacques Schnier designed this coin and has a net distribution of 71,424. Values range from $120 in AU to $190 in MS65.

The Alaska quarter is the only state quarter that features a Bear. Charles Vickers that shows a Grizzly Bear catching a Salmon under the North Star. The coin was struck in clad for circulation and proof sets along with a silver proof version. Mintages for business strike coins are P 251.8 million and D 254 million. Proof mintages are clad 2.08 million and 1.19 million silver. Values for the P & D are $2 MS65 the clad proof is worth $3 and the silver $6.

The last coin shows not a real Bear but an image of one. The Effigy Mounds quarter of 2017 shows a portion of the Effigy Mounds Park that also depicts a variety of other animals. The mounds were created by a collaboration of about 20 Native American tribes between 500 CE to about 1400 CE. The mounds are located north of Dubuque, Iowa near the Mississippi river. Renata Gordon and Richard Masters created this coin that was issued in a variety of compositions and strikes. There are business strikes from Philadelphia, Denver, and San Francisco along with proof strikes in clad and silver and an enhanced uncirculated special edition. Mintages are P 271 million, D 210 million, S 931 thousand and enhanced S 210 thousand. Proof mintages are clad 706 thousand and silver 496 thousand. Values are P $1, D $1 S $3 Enhanced $6. Proofs are valued at clad $3 and silver $6.

Collecting in the age of COVID

In lieu of this month's coin of the month, I will give some suggestions of activities collectors can partake in while staying at home. Even though there are no conventions, shows or club meetings there are still plenty of things to do to keep busy.

One thing to do is to re-organize your collection. Either eBay or amazon sells 2x2 holders, pages, and binders to put your coins in good order. Coin tubes and coin folders will help as well. Who knows, you might find a long-forgotten treasure in your collection.

While organizing your collection, you may also purchase a USB micro-scope. A decent one can be bought for between $20 and $40. It is a nice tool to check for re-punched mintmarks, overdates, double dies and other varieties. Most microscopes can take photos of your coins that can be sent to experts seeking a second opinion.

Take a break from binge watching movies and TV shows and pay a visit to the Newman Numismatic Portal, nnp.wustl.edu. There you can see collected videos of David Lisot. For many years, he taped educational programs given at the major conventions covering every aspect of collecting. Also, on the portal are thousands of publications and images to keep you entertained for months.

Another source of videos to scratch your collecting itch is YouTube. There are scores of producers of numismatic content. Some are roll searchers either homemade videos or live streams where you can interact with the host(s) and other collectors. Some of the better channel's worth checking out are "Half dolla make you holla", "Rob finds treasure", "Silver Seeker", "Quin's coins", "Pam's coins" and "Christopher collects". Some live streams ask for a donation to

search a roll on your behalf. If they find a silver, Proof, or other interesting coin, they will send it to you. They also have free giveaways and to participate they ask you to leave a comment on another of their videos. The winner is then selected using a random comment generator.

Lastly, you can shop online for the coins you need for your collection. As always, be careful who you deal with and only buy from sellers you trust. In addition to the standard buying sites, you can also check the sites of major auction companies such as Stack's Bowers, Heritage, Great Collections, and others. They broadcast their sales on their sites, and you can witness some of the most expensive coins out there being sold.

So, hunker down, wash your hands and this will pass before you know it and things will return to normal.

Half Dimes 1860 – 1873

This month's coin of the month is the Half Dime issued 1860 to 1873. This issue has pieces common enough for anyone to have a type coin and issues so rare, only an advanced collector can afford. James Longacre modified the design used in previous years removing the stars and changing the reverse. The obverse design consists of Liberty seated on a rock glancing back over her right shoulder. Her right hand rests on a shield inscribed with Liberty. In her left hand is a staff topped with a Liberty cap. Circling around is United States of America and the date. The reverse features a wreath composed of wheat, corn, oak and maple leaves. Inside the wreath is Half Dime. This is similar to the design used on the Barber dime. The usual location of the mint mark is inside the wreath, but some 1873- S coins show the mint mark under the wreath. Physically the coin measures 15.5 mm and weighs 1.24 grams of 90% silver and 10% copper. The first three years of the issue had large mintages peaking in 1861 with 3.36 million. Starting in 1863, Philadelphia mintages dropped dramatically reaching a low of 8,625 in 1867. During the Civil War, hoarders stashed away the coins as fast as the mint struck them. Coins not hoarded were exported, usually to be melted. On the west coast, mintages usually averaged 100,000 per year. The mintages began to rise after the war increasing to 837,000 in 1872. Meanwhile, in the late 1860's, the Philadelphia mint began striking nickel five cent coins in an effort to phase out the half dime. The last hurrah of the half dime was 1871-2 when the mint struck 1.87 and 2.95 million. There are two major varieties in this series. First is the 1861/0 overdate. This variety is best seen on mint state

examples. The other variety is the 1873 with the open and closed 3. Both open and closed 3 have the same value. It was about this time the most interesting coin of this series was created. In 1870, The San Francisco mint production dropped dramatically. For 108 years no one knew of the existence of an 1870-S half dime. In 1978, a collector looking through a dealer's junk box found one. The dealer might not have known what he had or thought the coin was fake. He purchased the coin and took to Rarcoa where it was discovered to be real. Not long after, the coin sold for over $400,000. When the coin was first submitted for third party grading, it received a grade of AU55. Years later it was resubmitted and was upgraded to MS63 then upgraded again to the current grade of MS64. While the coin is currently unique, there are rumors of another specimen resting in the cornerstone of the San Francisco mint. The current value of this coin ranges from $1.2 to $1.75 million. As previously stated, common type coins are easily available. Prices for such coins range from about $40 for a nice XF to $150 for a MS60 to $260 for a MS63. If you are ambitious to assemble a complete 26 coin base set, the key dates of 1863- 1867 are tough. Those dates run between $200 and $500 in good up to $1,000 or more in MS63. The set can easily cost $7,500 in XF and a MS63 set will set you back over $18,000. If you include the overdate add another $260 to $650. Lastly, Proof coins were issued each year of this series. Mintages range from a low of 460 in 1863 to 1,000 for several years. A nice Proof 63 coin will cost about $550.

American Arts Medals 1980 – 1984

This month's coins of the month are the gold American Arts Medals series 1980 to 1984. These medals were America's answer to the rising gold bullion market. In the five years of the program, the mint issued a one ounce and half ounce medal per year. Each medal portrayed a notable American artist, writer, musician, or architect. On the obverse is a portrait of the subject and the reverse depicts a scene or image related to the subject. While most bullion coins are struck in pure gold, the American Arts Medals were struck in a coin alloy of 90% gold. To bring the total gold weight to a full and half ounce it was necessary to use blanks weighing 1.111 and .555 ounces. The extra weight consists of an alloy of both copper and silver. The respective diameters of the ounce and half ounce medals are 1.26 and 1.08 inches.

Ordering the medals was quite an adventure. The Medals could only be ordered through the Post Office on special forms displayed next to the change of address, vacation hold and draft registration forms. Since the price of gold changed day by day, the selling price was based on the previous days close at the New York Commodities Exchange. In addition to the spot price, there was a surcharge of $14 per ounce and $7 per half ounce. Buyers could obtain those days selling price by calling an 800 number. The selling price was also verified at the post office and the order form was stamped with a cancellation stamp. Only three forms of payment were accepted. They were Cashier's Check, Certified Check or Postal Money Order. Each of those payments incurred a small expense to the buyer. The maximum number of medals per order was 25 and up to 5 orders could be placed per day. Mid way through the series, the mint contracted J. Aron and Company to broker the medals. Soon after, the mint also began accepting phone orders. The medals were struck at the West Point Bullion Depository and sent to the San Francisco Mint for processing. The turnaround time for these orders was up to six weeks. At first, demand was high but declined over the years. By 1984, the mint was already making plans to implement the silver/gold eagle program.

Here is a list of the medals along with the final sales figures, first one ounce then half ounce.

1980 – Grant Wood 312,709, Marian Anderson 261,624.

1981 – Mark Twain 116,371, Willa Cather 97,331.

1982 – Louis Armstrong 409,096, Frank Lloyd Wright 348,305.

1983 – Robert Frost 390,669, Alexander Calder 75,571

1984 – Helen Hayes 33,546, John Steinbeck 32,572.

Today the medals in original packaging sell for a slight premium over spot price except for the 1984 issues which are a little higher.

Funny back Dollars

This month's currency of the month is the small size dollar bills of series 1928 and 1934. Prior to the introduction of these notes, paper currency measured 187 x 79 mm. To reduce costs and increase productivity, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing reduced the size of notes by 31% to 156 x 66 mm. There were two types of small size funny back $1 notes from the period. The term "funny back" comes from the reverse design on which a large word ONE with a smaller overlapping one dollar dominates the center of the bill. This has inspired critics of the bill to compare this note to play money.

The obverses while having a similar design which for the most part is still being used today, were authorized by different laws. The first was the United States Note. It is easily identified by the red Treasury seal and serial numbers. This note was issued only in series 1928 and features the signatures of Woods and Woodin. 1.872 million notes were printed along with 8,000 star notes. The other is the Silver Certificate. The 1928 series silver certificate has 6 sub series depending on who was Secretary of the Treasury and Treasurer at the time. Silver certificates are easily identified by the blue Treasury seal and serial number. On this issue as well as the U. S. Note, the star identifying a star note appears before the serial number. Today the star appears at the end of the serial number.

Here are the signature pairings for each series 1928 silver certificates. 1928 Tate – Mellon, 1928a Woods – Mellon, 1928b Woods – Mills, 1928c Woods – Woodin, 1928d Julian – Woodin and 1928e Julian – Morganthau. Total 1928

series silver certificates printed were 3.6 billion along with 37.56 million star notes. For the 1934 series, the obverse was changed slightly. The Treasury seal was moved from left of the portrait to the right and a large number 1 took its place. This series shows the signatures of Julian and Morganthau and has a printing of 682 million with 7.68 million star notes.

After this series, the reverse was changed to the current design featuring the Great Seal of the United States. Collecting these notes is a mixed bag. If all you desire is a common type note, a nice xf specimen can be found for under $50. A three-note set of a U. S. Note, 1928 and 1934 in xf will run about $200. The real challenge is to complete a set of 16 notes that includes all regular and star notes from all three series. The Key notes are the U.S. Note star, 1928c star, 1928d star and both 1928e regular and star. Even if you have $14,500 for a vg set to $57,000 for an xf set, just finding the notes is a challenge as there are about a dozen each of the 1928c, d and e star notes known.

Coins of 1970

This Month's coins of the month are the issues of 1970 that turned 50 years old this year. These coins are common enough that anyone can obtain them all yet there are enough varieties and high-grade rarities to challenge even the most advanced collector. For each denomination I will break down mintages, varieties, and values. The values come from the PCGS price guide of certified coins in MS67 and Proof 67 deep cameo.

Lincoln Cents. Circulation strikes for this denomination were produced in Philadelphia, Denver, and San Francisco. Respective mintages are P – 1.898 billion, D – 2.891 billion and S – 690 million. Proof mintages for all five denominations this year was 2.63 million. The key varieties are the 1970-S small date in both mint state and proof along with the 1970-S double die obverse. The values are in mint state are P - $10, D - $12, S large date - $2 and small date - $65. For the proofs, the large date value is $20 and small date $250. The King of this year's coins is the double die obverse valued at $15,000.

Jefferson Nickels. As with the previous two years, no coins were struck in Philadelphia. This left the task of production to the Denver and San Francisco mints. The mintages are D – 515 million and S – 238 million. The real value for these coins lies on those exhibiting full steps on the reverse. Ordinary strikes are worth $30 for the D and $14 for the S. In full steps, the values rise to $5,500 for the D and $425 for the S. Proofs catalog for $17.

Roosevelt Dimes. As with the nickels, the highest value dimes are those with full strike details. In this case the best strikes show full bands on the torch on the reverse. Another interesting variety in the dimes is the no S proof. Mintages for this year's dimes are P – 345 million and D – 754 million. Values for the regular strikes are P - $10 and D - $6. Full band dimes are worth P – $950 and D – $150. The proof with the mintmark books for $15 while the no mintmark variety goes for $775.

Washington Quarters. The most interesting quarters are all the D mint double dies. The most valuable being the FS 101 variety. Regular mintages are P – 136 million and D – 417 million. Values for these coins are P - $15 and D - $8. The FS 10 double die catalogs for $3,000. The proof is worth $50.

Kennedy Half. This is the only silver alloy coin issued this year. It is also the first not intended for circulation coin and was issued only in mint sets. Struck at the Denver mint this coin has a mintage of 2.15 million. That makes this coin

slightly rarer than its proof counterpart. Values for the mint state coin is $45 and the proof $20.

If all you desire are nice uncirculated and proof raw coins, you can easily obtain a mint or proof set. These sets generally sell for between $10 and $15. Quality varies from set to set yet there is a small chance of finding a valuable rarity.

Dude, Where's my mintmark?

The subject of this month's coins of the month are the coins missing a mintmark. This list only includes coins struck on dies without a mintmark where one should occur and not coins struck with grease filled dies. Also excluded are dollar coins missing edge lettering. On this list are two circulating coins and six proofs. With that said, let's begin.

1922 plain cent. In 1922, no coins were struck in either Philadelphia or San Francisco. This left the burden of production on the Denver mint. Sometime around February 26-28, a die clash occurred. A mint worker, knowing there would be no more dies sent from Philadelphia, used a file to clean the clash marks. In doing so, the mintmark was erased. This die along with two reverse dies, strong and weak, were used to strike several hundred thousand coins. Today about 15,000 survive in all grades. This coin is unusual in the fact the assigned grade comes from the reverse. Many fakes exist by either removing the D or using fake dies. Values for the strong reverse range from$625 in Fine to $100,000 in MS 65.

1968 proof dimes. In 1968, after a three year hiatus, the mint resumed striking proof coins, this time at the San Francisco mint. Here a die with no mintmark was used to strike a small number of coins before the error was discovered. Today there are about a dozen known. This coin is rare in all grades with values ranging from $11,500 to $37,500 in proof 64 to 69.

1970 proof dime. In 1970, about 2,200 no S proofs were struck and about 500 are known today. Many could still be buried in collections, waiting to be discovered. Values for the coin range from about $700 to $2,500 in proof 64 to 69. 1971 proof nickel. This is the only nickel on the list. Once again, a lazy mint worker let a no S die slip into production. Only about 1,655 were reported struck and today several hundred are extant. Values for this nickel are $800 to $3,350 in proof 63 to 69.

1975 proof dime. The rarest of the no S proof is the 1975 dime. There are only two known and may be the product of shenanigans at the mint. Two examples of similar tricks are an S proof quarter struck on a 1900 Philadelphia quarter and an S proof quarter struck on a Canadian quarter. The two coins are graded MS 66 and MS 68 and are valued at $325,000 and $525,000. 1982 dime. The other circulating coin is the 1982 no P dime.

In 1980, the P mint mark was added to all coins except the cent. In 1982, a pair of dies escaped having a mintmark added before being put into production. The two dies are identified as having a strong and weak date. As many as 150,000 coins could have been struck but mint workers may have caught the error early limiting the total number struck. An estimated 8,000 to 10,000 coins were released in Ohio with the strong date and about 500 weak date dimes were found near Pittsburg. Values for the strong date range from $250 in MS 64 to $2,500 in MS 68. Full bands on the torch raise the values a little.

1983 proof dime. Mintages for the 1983 no S dime are unknown but there are an estimated 100 existing. As with all Proof coins of the period, almost all are deep cameo. The values here range from $550 to $6,500 in proof 64 to 70. 1990 proof cent. In 1985, the mint switched from hand punching mintmarks to placing them on the master hub. This was meant to eliminate the future possibility of missing mint-marks. However, a business strike die was sent to San Francisco, sandblasted, polished, and put to work striking proof coins. About 200 are known and are worth between $2,100 and $5,500 in proof 63 to 69. For the sake of completeness, there is a 1976 silver proof IKE dollar with no mintmark. However, this coin is regarded as a trial strike made in Philadelphia and not a production coin.

Coin searches in England

For this month's column. I will look at how collectors in England search circulating coins for valuable pieces. Here in America Youtube hosts search coins by the box with half dollars, cents and nickels being the most popular. In England, the top three denominations are two pounds, 50 pence and ten pence. So, to keep this article at a reasonable length, I will focus on the two pound coins. A discussion of the various collectable ten pence coins appears in the December 2018 issue of this newsletter. A discussion of the 50 pence commemoratives will be in a future column. In the U.S., coins are placed in paper rolls that are either machine or hand wrapped then placed in a box. In England, coins come in small baggies that have a small cut for easy opening or sandwich style bags with a fold over flap to keep the bag closed. The small bags are then placed in a larger clear bag. Two pound bags contain 25 bags of 10 coins for a total of 500 pounds face value.

The current circulating two pound coin was introduced in 1997 as a circulating bi-metallic coin. The coin is 28.4 mm and weighs 12 grams. The yellowish outer ring is an alloy of nickel and brass. The inner core is copper nickel. The edge is reeded, and most coins also have an inscription that compliments the reverse design. The common obverse features a portrait of the Queen, the motto, denomination, and the date. On Youtube, several British coin searchers try to complete a set of two pound commemoratives. Some use a special mat to sort the desired coins and the preferred means of storage is a booklet with

compartments to keep the coins in order.

From 1999 to 2016, a total of 36 different commemorative designs were issued. While each commemorative is a one-year issue, there are two designs issued as regular issues. The first, technologies, shows technological advances from the industrial age to today. The second, issued since 2015, depicts Britannia. In recent years, lesser demand for this coin has resulted in lower mintages making this coin worth slightly more than face value. Most of the common commemoratives are also worth only a small premium over face value but some scarcer issues such as the commonwealth games Northern Ireland can bring up to 30 pounds.

Here is a list of the two pound commemoratives. 1999 Rugby world cup, 2000 100th anniversary transatlantic radio, 2002 Commonwealth games England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2003 50th anniversary DNA double helix, 2004 300th anniversary first railway locomotive, 2005 400th anniversary Guy Fawkes, 60th anniversary end of WWII, 2006 200th anniversary birth of Isambard Brunel, Arches of Paddington station, 2007 300th anniversary Act of Union, 200th anniversary Abolishment of the slave trade, 2008 100th anniversary 1908 London Olympics, London Olympic handover, 2009 200th anniversary birth of Charles Darwin, 250th anniversary birth of Robert Burns, 2010 100th anniversary death of Florence Nightingale, 2011 400th anniversary King James bible, 500th anniversary Maiden voyage of the Mary Rose, 2012 200th anniversary birth of Charles Dickens, Olympic handover to Rio, 2013 150th anniversary London underground train, London underground roundel, 350th anniversary Golden Guinea, 2014 100th anniversary WWI, Lord Kichler, 500th anniversary Trinity house, 2015 800th anniversary Magna Carta, WWI Royal navy with flag, WWI Royal navy no flag, 2016 350th anniversary Great fire of London, WWI Army, Shakespeare Comedy, Shakespeare History, Shakespeare Tragedy.

2020 Circulation Finds

For this month's coins of the month, I will recap all the nice circulation finds from 2020. Working in a job where I handle a lot of change makes coin searching easy. Last December, I purchased a cheap pocket calendar to document each of my finds by date and the out of pocket cost of each coin. The following is a breakdown of my finds by denomination.

Cents. By volume, the largest number of finds were wheat cents. Over the year, I found 526 wheats. Most were found in April from what must have been a collection dump. Included in that total were 93 of the 140 possible date/mintmark combinations. The oldest cent found was a 1909-P. Instead of giving each date, I will give the total number found by decade. Form 1909-1919 (42), 1920-1929 (60), 1930-1939 (122), 1940-1949 (108) and 1950- 1958 (184). In addition to the wheat cents, I looked for the San Francisco circulation strikes of 1968-1974. This year I found 81 such coins with all dates accounted for. There were also some odd coins found like counterstamps with JFK, Nebraska, and the Masons along with a 2000-P wide AM and two 1969-S proofs.

Nickels. Jefferson nickel finds were a little light. The best find was a 1939-D. Also found was a 1939-P, 1945-P silver, 1946-P with a lamination error, 1951-D, 1977-S proof, and a pair of 2009-D's.

Dimes. I only saved six dimes this year, but they were all silver. The dates are 1942-P, 1956-P, 1959-D, 1963-D and (2) 1964-D. At current silver prices on 11-12-2020, the coins are worth about $10.

Quarters. Aside from the cents, the best finds were quarters. I found four silver coins, 1956- P, 1963-D, 1964-D, and 1999-S Connecticut silver proof. West point quarters were well represented with (2) Lowell, War in the Pacific, San Antonio Missions, and American Samoa found. Besides the Connecticut proof, I also found a 1980-S and 2004-S Florida proofs and a 2015-S Saratoga non proof. Other finds include a 2001-P New York silver plated, 2005-P Kansas weak T in Trust, and two 2015- P Homestead with die chips on the roof.
Dollars. The last finds were eight Ike dollars, all were common clad coins. For me, the best finds were the West point quarters and all the finds combined cost me $23.05. I hope the finds in 2021 will be just as nice.